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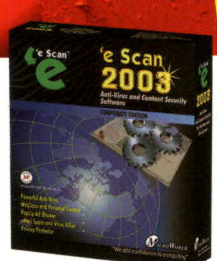

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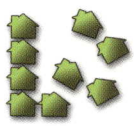

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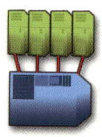

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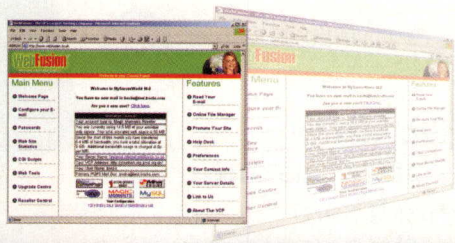

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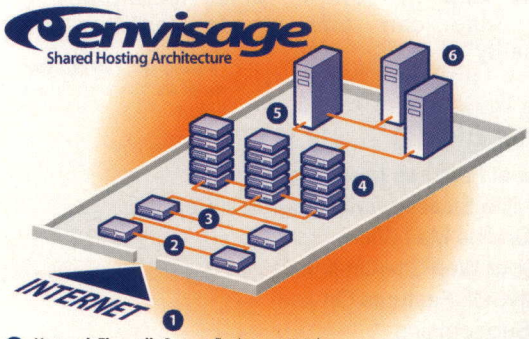

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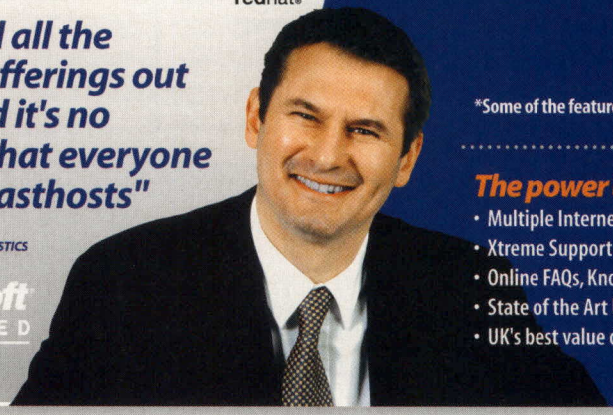

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Welcome

THE *PI* CREW REVEAL WHAT THEY WERE SCARED OF WHEN THEY WERE CHILDREN

James Thornton
Features Editor

"There was a bit of fluff behind the armrest in my dad's Cortina and he said if I took it out the car would break. I was terrified I might forget and we'd crash."

Mark Billen
Staff Writer

"Growing up frightened me, and now I see why. Having responsibility is overrated and working's a nightmare. There's been a mistake – I should be in school."

Colleen Johnson
Sub Editor

"I was terrified of my mother's pressure cooker, and would never go into the kitchen when it was on. I was convinced it would blow up – one day it did!"

Nicky Bartlett
Senior Designer

"I dreamt every night for years that a huge maggot was at the end of my bed under the covers and if my toes touched it I would end up hideously deformed."

Lee Cornish
Multimedia Editor

"The cupboard under the stairs terrified me – I spent most of my childhood locked in there! Also, my lion curtains that came alive in my nightmares."

Editor's welcome

When I was a wee lad, a whole gang of us used to play around a local burn (or 'stream' as English people would have it). As with any good burn, there was a scary tunnel at one point. Dark and foreboding, this tunnel's fear factor increased dramatically for me when somebody told me that there were rats in it. Being six, I went into a blind panic, despite the fact that I had never seen a rat, and didn't even know what they were.

Thinking about it the other day, I realised that much of the hysteria over viruses is just like the panic-stricken fear I used to have over that local tunnel. Because people don't fully understand how viruses work, they're susceptible to scare tactics – and so we're led from panic to panic, each time being told that this latest virus is the one that's going to wipe us all out.

How dangerous are viruses, though? And surely if we could identify their power, we could pick out their weaknesses, and make sure that we win the battle against them. This is why we've devoted our cover feature to blitzing viruses into oblivion. We blow the lid on the scaremongering, so that you can be much more confident of kicking them into touch once and for all. In fact, I'm off to face that tunnel again, and I bet there are no rats whatsoever...

Thomas Watson

Thomas Watson, Editor
thomas@paragon.co.uk

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Why we're the number one Net magazine for:

In-depth features
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Practical Internet is devoted to making your life as hassle-free as possible, with dedicated sections for Web design and browsing help. With more workshops than our rivals, we aim to keep you up to date with the latest techniques. What's more, our workshops are only written by experts, so you can expect excellent results every time.

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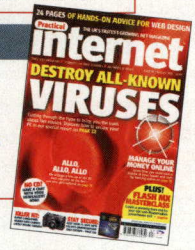

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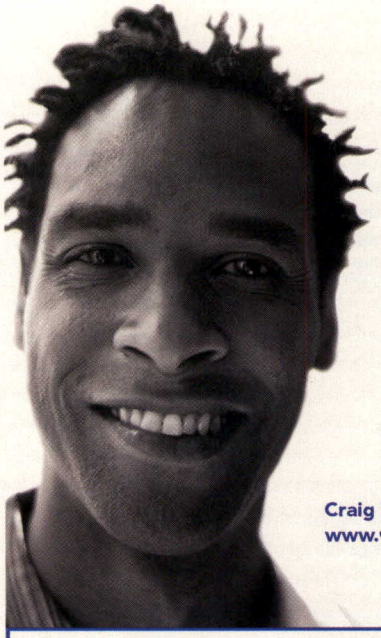

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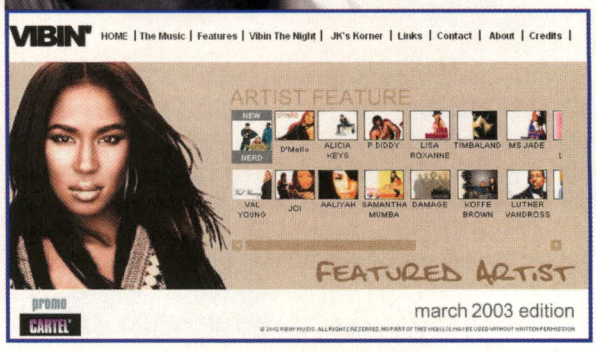
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Practical internet

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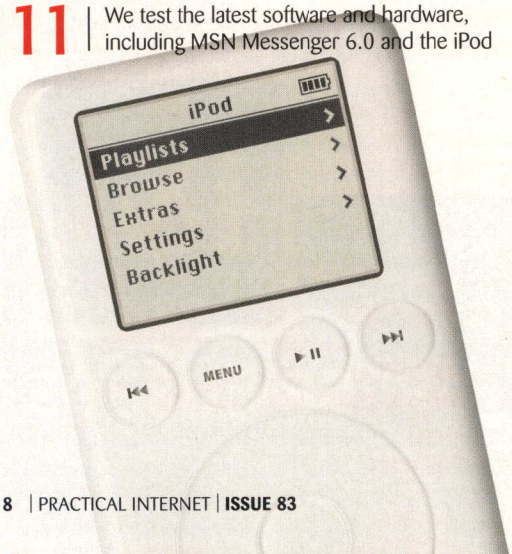

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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO BUILD STUNNING SITES
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STEP-BY-STEP WORKSHOPS
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WELCOME...
SOMETIMES YOU HAVE to bite the bullet and accept that there are no longer easy routes to success. We've been showing you database-type Web design concepts for some months now, but have shied away from getting into the nitty gritty, simply because databases are so complicated.
You've shown us that's what you want, though, so this month we start the first of a three-part series on how you can generate your own database-driven site in Dreamweaver. This month, we set up your local server with PHP and Apache. Enjoy!
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News

All the latest Web sites, products and services

Microsoft swoops on spammers

JUNK MAIL BARONS SUED AS EFFORTS ARE STEPPED UP TO WIN THE BATTLE AGAINST SPAM

THE BATTLE TO beat spam has taken a new twist following Microsoft's decision to sue 15 suspected junk emailers.

The company has filed legal action against 13 Americans accused of spamming Microsoft customers with misleading emails. It has also launched suits against two defendants in the UK who are charged with illegally harvesting Microsoft email addresses to compile mailing lists.

The 15 defendants involved are accused of being collectively responsible for over two billion unsolicited messages sent to Microsoft customers. According to recent figures, over half of the emails we receive are now unsolicited, and Microsoft is hoping to lead the global charge against the spammers.

"Spam knows no borders. It's an issue that requires global co-ordination so that industry and government have the maximum ability to protect consumers," said Brad Smith, senior vice president and general counsel for Microsoft.

Legal shake-up

While Microsoft continues to ramp up its anti-spam campaign, things are set to get even worse for the spammers as the UK prepares to accept the EU Communications Data Protection Directive by October 2003.

Plans for the new legislation include an 'opt-in' ruling preventing marketers from contacting anyone unless they have gained permission first, unless a prior business relationship already exists.

Many observers warn that although this may deter some legitimate marketing firms who want to avoid landing in hot water, the law will be difficult to enforce due to the spammers' innate ability to keep their identity secret.

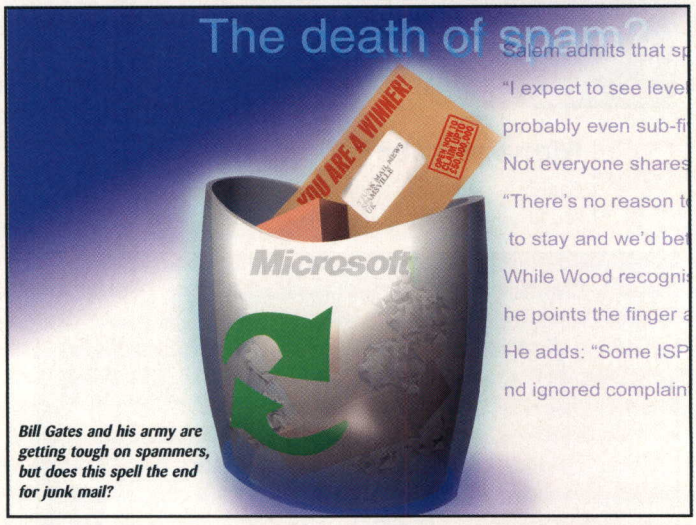
Enrique Salem, CEO of anti-spam software developer Brightmail, goes along with this theory, telling Silicon.com: "A lot of spam can hide its identity – being sent through open relay or spoofing domains to disguise itself."

"A LOT OF SPAM CAN BE SENT THROUGH OPEN RELAY OR SPOOFING DOMAINS TO DISGUISE IT" ENRIQUE SALEM

The death of spam?

Salem admits that spam levels are likely to get higher in the next few months, but predicts that we'll see the death of junk mail within three years, pointing to the implementation of improved filtering technology as the key to crippling the junk emailers.

"I expect to see levels of spam falling through 2004 and 2005, and by 2006 I expect to see spam levels certainly sub-ten, probably even sub-five percent of email traffic," he said.



Bill Gates and his army are getting tough on spammers, but does this spell the end for junk mail?

Not everyone shares Salem's optimism however, and Paul Wood of Brightmail's rival, MessageLabs (**www.messagelabs.com**), says it's unrealistic to think spam is on the way out: "There's no reason to believe it'll die out in three years, or ten years – the fact is spam is here to stay and we'd better get used to it."

While Wood recognises that Microsoft's law suits might act as a deterrent to some email marketers, he points the finger at the ISPsC themselves, saying they must get their house in order: "Some ISPs have turned a blind eye to spammers operating on their networks and ignored complaints about them. While they may indirectly profit from these activities – certainly as more bandwidth is consumed – it's their customers who have to foot the bill."

Email loss worse than divorce

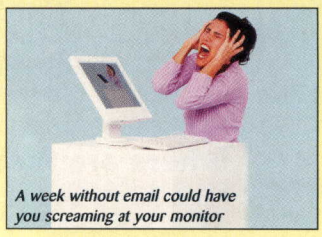
EMAIL ADMINISTRATORS LOSE THEIR COOL WHEN IT ALL GOES HORRIBLY WRONG, REPORTS IT MANAGERS' SURVEY

ANYONE WHO THINKS that getting divorced, moving house or getting married are the most stressful things anyone can do should try working without email for a while.

That's the verdict of a survey of IT managers, which says that email deprivation is the one thing most likely to make system administrators blow their top. The study, carried out by independent research firm Dynamic Markets on behalf of Veritas, saw one in three respondents claim that aggressive reactions by users meant that a week without email is more stressful for them than getting married or divorced, moving house or suffering a minor car accident.

"Ensuring a continuous delivery of service is very important," says Chris Boorman, vice president of marketing, Veritas.

"The stress associated with email downtime and non-availability of systems is not to be underestimated."



A week without email could have you screaming at your monitor

shorts

→ Music and movie swappers could soon find their PCs up in smoke. US Senator Orrin Hatch has sparked controversy by suggesting media pirates should have their machines remotely destroyed: "That may be the only way you can teach someone about copyright," he hissed.

→ Retired German police vehicles are being flogged off on eBay. With traditional public auctions proving unpopular, the Panda cars are now fetching around £675 on the site. With average mileages of 300,000 they can't be much 'cop', although buyers are said to be very happy.

Got a news story?
Please contact
James Thornton
Telephone: 01202 209379
Fax: 01202 299955
Email: jamest@paragon.co.uk

BT teams up with Yahoo!

ISP GIANT REINVENTS ITSELF AS BRITISH TELECOM TOPS ONE MILLION BROADBAND CONNECTIONS

BT HOPES TO shake up the broadband market following its decision to hook up with Yahoo! to release a new ADSL service.

The company has ditched its Openworld brand in favour of a new venture called BT Yahoo! Broadband, which it hopes will put the wind up the likes of AOL and Freeserve.

The development follows the announcement that BT has reached the one million broadband subscribers mark, a figure which it hopes to raise to five million by 2006.

BT Yahoo! Broadband will be available from September and will draw upon Yahoo's considerable content in an effort to improve value for money for customers. The service costs £29.99 a month, which includes 100Mb of Web space, built-in virus protection, integrated parental controls, and applications to access Webcam and digital photo libraries.

Unsurprisingly, BT Retail chief executive Pierre Danon is upbeat about the Yahoo! deal, saying: "The alliance is the next step to realising broadband Britain, delivering services and content that will appeal to the mass market.

"For customers to get the most out of the Internet, several factors are crucial. Access must be safe and fast, use must be personalised and flexible content must be exciting, engaging and imaginative."

Beck in time

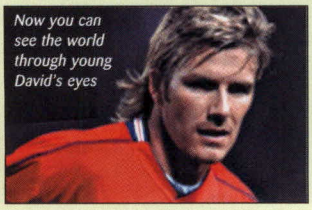
TAKE A WALK IN GOLDENBALLS' BOOTS ON THE WEB

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, David Beckham hasn't always been an international footballing megastar, as a new site devoted to his life proves.

The online tour at **www.lbwf.gov.uk/beckham** lets you wander down the highways and byways of the Real Madrid star's life, taking in all his childhood stomping grounds such as the playground, school and council football pitches where he plied his trade.

Fans of the floppy-haired footballer can even visit the Walthamstow dog track where the millionaire once earned £10 a night collecting glasses.

Chris Robbins of Waltham Forest Council, who launched the site, said: "This online tourist trail is being launched to celebrate his early life, but also, importantly, to encourage other young people who want to pursue their own passion."



Now you can see the world through young David's eyes

Subaquatic audio

BRUNEL STUDENT WINS AWARD FOR AQUATIC MP3 PLAYER

A BRUNEL UNIVERSITY student has received an innovation award from AOL for his underwater MP3 player.

Sam James is one of a handful of final year Design and Technology candidates who were picked to exhibit their innovative work.

Integrated into a set of swimming goggles, the MP3 player operates by vibrating sound directly into the skull in order to achieve a high quality of output.

The original brief was to make visits to the pool less mundane, although subsequent commercial interest could see it used for diving communication.

"The award from AOL Broadband represents a real vote of confidence as I leave university," Sam enthuses. "And the award money means that 'Soundwaves' is one step closer to the shops."

Sam James with his underwater MP3 player. Alas, you can't buy them yet

Saddam's domain

FALLEN DICTATOR'S HOME PAGE GETS A FACELIFT

THE IRAQI URUKLINK site, formerly the official online presence for Saddam Hussein's regime, returned to the Web in June.

After taking leave during the conflict, the anticipated URL was said to have undergone a few cosmetic 'changes'. Staff for the country's State Company for Internet Services confirmed that all 'Saddam' references have now been eradicated.

However, lead administrator Ala'a Hassan Harif believes that ridding the ISP of its remaining loyalists could be far more difficult.

"The problem is very global and very dangerous," claims Harif. "The trouble is that we still have people who support the old regime."

Star struck

WITH THE FOOTBALL SEASON GEARING UP, WE GATHER THE SUMMER'S BIGGEST MOVERS AND SHAKERS IN THE TRANSFER MARKET

David Beckham

www.beckham-magazine.com

Would he go or would he stay? The on-off departure of Man Utd's golden boy turned into a real saga this summer. He's now at Madrid, but fans can still get their Beckham fix from this well-designed site.

Harry Kewell

www.angelfire.com/ks/kewell

We'll admit that Robin Askwith lookalike Harry was still pondering his future when we went to press, but we couldn't resist getting his cherubic face in the mag. This fan site pays homage to the Aussie looker, and gives you all manner of facts on his soccer career.

Gabriel Batistuta

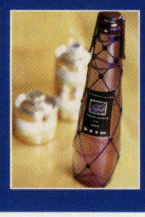
www.gabrielbatistuta.net

'Batigol' may be past his better days, but the Argentine supremo still shocked many after snubbing interest from Chelsea to join Al Arabi of Qatar. The lucrative deal should see him set up for retirement, and this site tracks his glittering career. →

News shorts

→ Spicy service provider JalaMex has launched a cut-price Webmail service promising to furnish tech-savvy youngsters with a personalised domain for their account. The service costs between £20 and £40 per year, which includes filters to remove viruses and spam, a digital photo library and 10Mb of free Web space. For more information, visit **www.jalamex.com**.

→ It may be one of the oldest drinks around, yet even the humble bottle of wine is now embracing the tech age. Students at St Martins College in London have designed a wine bottle with a built-in mini TV screen that displays taste notes, tips and a short film detailing the history of the plonk.



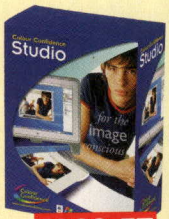
NEW Software

FIND OUT ABOUT THE LATEST AND GREATEST SOFTWARE PROGRAMS

Enhanced Colour Confidence Studio

www.colourconfidence.com

Thanks to the advent of digital photography, there's no need to hang around the high street for an hour like a lost dog while your photos are developed. This printing solution from TypeMaker is designed to give users the ability to reel off professional-looking images with the minimum of hassle. The latest version includes tools such as Pantone ColorVision Spyder and iCorrect Professional, a Photoshop plug-in for correcting colours with a single click.

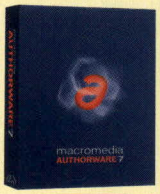


£292.57

Authorware 7

www.macromedia.com

Enabling non-programmers to conjure up interactive, rich media e-learning applications, this new version of Authorware comes with a number of new features designed to improve accessibility. The program allows users to import PowerPoint presentations, play back content on Mac OS X and integrate content with learning management systems.



£2,149

SilverFast 6 DC-VLT

www.agxuk.com

Designed to give digital photographers the chance to organise and showcase their shots more effectively, SilverFast 6 with Virtual Light Table combines special camera features such as colour temperature, exposure control and a red-eye tool with unique facilities for viewing, organising, editing and printing photos.

£109.47

Labour hacked off

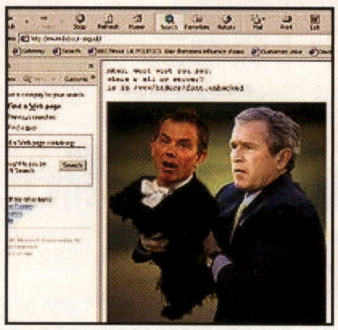
POLITICAL PARTY LEFT RED-FACED AFTER NET ATTACK AND PM'S NON-EXISTENT EMAIL ADDRESS

THE GOVERNMENT WAS left reeling after its Internet division was found wanting on two fronts.

First the official site, **labour.org.uk**, was sabotaged by opportunist hackers who posted images depicting Tony Blair as George Bush's lap dog. Within hours the offending material was removed and normal service resumed, although no statements were given. It was suggested that a characteristically lax security approach by political parties was to blame, with perhaps a flunked site update handing attackers their chance.

Meanwhile, Mr.Blair has suffered Tory derision for his lack of an email address.

It emerged that the PM is among a minority of world leaders, including Robert Mugabe and Fidel Castro, without a public inbox. Although many consider this a slur on his own policies for an 'e-government', Downing Street dismissed the notion as 'impractical' but advised that plans are in the offing. However, the opposition wasted no time in cheekily signing Tony up for hotmail, and he can now be found at **RtHonTonyBlairMP@hotmail.com.**



'Hilarious' pictures of Tony Blair and George Bush were posted to the Labour Party's Web site

The Labour Party is a democratic socialist party. It believes that by the strength of our common endeavour we achie
About Labour
Get involved
Our policies
Latest news
Campaigns
Your questions
The Tories would march Britain to the exit door of Europe
Got a question on Europe?

He might be a self-confessed man of the people, but Tony Blair is one of only a handful of world leaders without a publicly-available email address

Flaming Nora!

LIPS PICK UP TOP GONG AS THE 'INTERNET OSCARS' ARE ANNOUNCED EXCLUSIVELY ONLINE

THE FLAMING LIPS were among the big winners at this year's Webby awards, which were revealed in an exclusive online ceremony.

The bizarre US combo scooped the gong for best music site for their official site (**www.flaminglips.com**) which was praised for its innovative use of technology and the group's willingness to embrace the Internet age.

For the first time ever, the awards, dubbed the 'Internet Oscars', were announced exclusively online, and the organisers dispensed with a glitzy ceremony in favour of avatars, which announced the winners on the Web throughout the day.

"Our nominees are using the Web in new and original ways to bring people together," said Tiffany Shlain, Webby awards founder. "We want to follow their lead by using the medium to honour winners in a powerful and uniquely Webby way."

Other big-name winners included Google for best news site, PayPal for best finance site and eBay for best services. The irreverent British site Rathergood.com scooped the People's Choice award for best weird site.

The Flaming Lips won the race for the prize – a shiny Webby award

Webby winners

A SELECTION OF THE BIG WINNERS AT THE NOT-SO-STAR-STUDDED INTERNET EVENT OF THE YEAR

Education
NASA Earth Observatory
earthobservatory.nasa.gov

Film
indieWIRE
www.indiewire.com

Finance
PayPal
www.paypal.com

Music
Flaming Lips
www.flaminglips.com

News
Google News
news.google.com

Sports
ESPN.com
www.espn.com

Activism
ActForChange
www.actforchange.com

Commerce
Amazon.com
www.amazon.com

Community
Meetup
www.meetup.com

Weird
Rathergood.com
www.rathergood.com

*A full list of the Webby winners is available from **www.webbyawards.com***

V21 STANDARD

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224 Hours pm

4 Hour cut off
you can redial straight away

Technical Support
at low National Rate call costs

Support for modem
standards upto V90 & 64k ISDN

Online account management
via secure control panel

VISIT: www.v21.co.uk or call the sign up hotline on:

0800 089 21 21

News

shorts

→ If you're thinking of picking a fantasy football team for the coming season but are bored with the same old games, why not head for **VirtuallySport.com**, which claims to take interactivity to new levels. The game combines the familiar tension of 'live' fantasy footie with some new complex tactical challenges based on 'total team tactics'.

→ Energy firm Powergen is denying any connection to the rather unfortunately named Italian site **www.powergenitalia.com**. Rumours had swept the Net that the phallically-named domain was part of the company's plans to introduce its massive presence into Europe. Disappointingly, it turns out that Powergen Italia is actually an Italian battery firm. Crude puns on a postcard, please.

Net watch

INTERNET FREEDOM'S **CHRIS ELLISON** MONITORS THE LATEST ONLINE DEVELOPMENTS

CORONEX IS THE latest computer virus to exploit panic about real world events. The mass-mailing Windows worm tries to persuade people to open an attachment about the spread of the offline virus SARS. The virus then forwards itself to all the contacts in the Outlook address book.

The real problem is not so much the computer virus itself, but our increasing tendency to see disaster lurking around every corner. Take the September 11 attacks over 18 months ago. Since the attacks, international airlines have suffered from a fall in travellers despite a statistically insignificant risk.

"THERE IS A WIDESPREAD AND DANGEROUS VIRUS SPREADING RAPIDLY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD"

Or consider the attack launched on Iraq for allegedly harbouring Weapons of Mass Destruction. In February the world was also gripped by SARS in China. The World Health Organisation described it as a 'world-wide health threat'. Many people rushed to buy (ineffective) surgical masks and the airline industry was crippled still further. By June, SARS had claimed a total of less than 600 lives. By contrast, the WHO announced in April that Malaria kills over 3,000 children every day in Africa.

This all lends credibility to the notion that there is a far more widespread and dangerous virus spreading rapidly throughout the Western world. One anonymous email branded it Severe Loss of Perspective Syndrome (or SLOPS). Fortunately it is easily cured by the realisation that new problems are always overstated and that our capacity to deal with them is greater than at any other time in history.

Internet Freedom can be contacted on campaign@netfreedom.org. The campaign's Web site is at www.netfreedom.org

Baby .com back

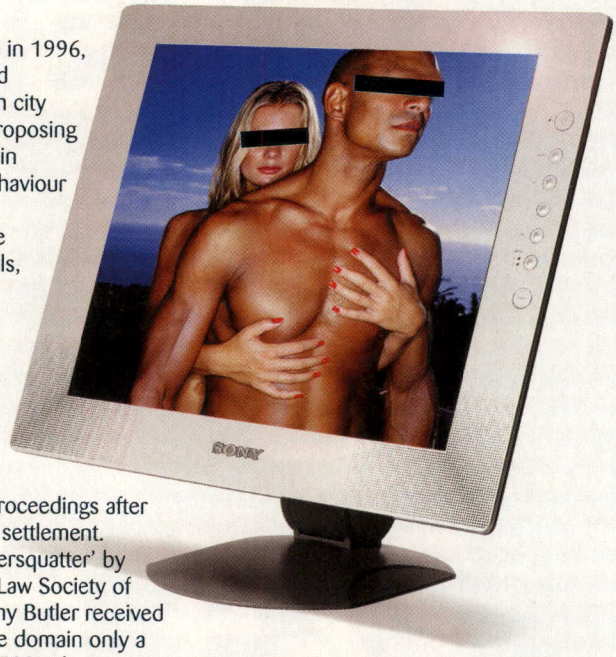
A TRIPLE-HEADER OF URL CUSTODY BATTLES FINDS SEX DOMAIN BACK IN THE HANDS OF ITS RIGHTFUL OWNER

TWO YEARS OF legal wrangling has ended with the US Supreme Court's decision on who owns Sex.com

An appeal from Stephen Michael Cohen was rejected following a ruling that original owner Gary Kremen should receive possession. Registry service VeriSign is now accused of wrongfully transferring the domain name in 1995, and could face crippling fines. Sex.com is understandably valuable, commanding $500,000 a month in advertising alone, and Kremen now faces a battle to recoup lost earnings.

Similarly, the rights to Barcelona.com were also resolved after three years in the courts. US judges had twice ruled that Barcelona City Council was entitled to the URL, rather than owner Joan Nogueras Cobo. Purchased under his wife's name in 1996, Nogueras found opposition from city officials after proposing a tourist portal in 1999. Their behaviour was deemed appalling by the Court of Appeals, vindicating Mr. Nogueras, and condemning previous judgments.

In Scotland, the owner of Lawscot.co.uk avoided legal proceedings after an out of court settlement. Deemed a 'cybersquatter' by contesters the Law Society of Scotland, Tommy Butler received £10,000 for the domain only a year after his £500 valuation was considered too steep.



Problems over the most memorable URL in the world have finally been resolved

Hoax of the month

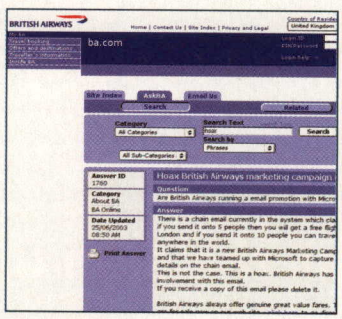
EMAIL PRANKSTERS FIND SARS EPIDEMIC AND IRAQI WAR FAIR GAME FOR DUPING TRAVELLERS

THIS LATEST SCAM, offering free British Airways flights, claims to be an initiative to get anxious tourists back in the sky.

Exploiting the public's panic over SARS and potential terrorist threats, the chain messages insist that forwarding the email will be rewarded with free international flights. Many versions include a private phone number of an unknown woman called 'Dolly Francis', but callers are treated to an angry message condemning the hoax. Expectant flyers have also contacted British Airways directly to claim their prize, although the company has denied all knowledge.

However, for many the joke only wears thinner and thinner, with this type of scam happening all too often. This particular case shares many similarities with a previous Microsoft-inspired e-swindle started in 1997.

Inboxes were plagued by letters from a Bill Gates impersonator offering $1,000 to all those who passed the email on.



British Airways has denied all knowledge of the chain mail offering free flights

BT's rude awakening

TELECOM GIANT TELLS PORNO-HUNGRY STAFF TO GET THEIR COATS... OR SHOULD THAT BE DIRTY MACS?

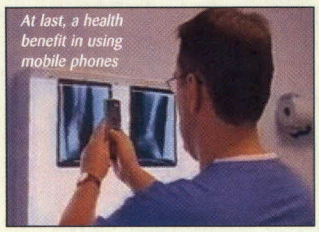
FOLLOWING A STRICT anti-porn campaign, BT has announced that 200 of its staff have been relieved of their duties in the last 18 months.

Workers had repeatedly ignored a number of email warnings regarding using company systems to access and view prohibited material. As a consequence, 10 of the offenders were referred to the police, while another received a custodial sentence.

This hardline approach has backing from the company's top brass, including group chief executive Ben Verwaayen.

→ Over 300 YMCA leisure centres in Australia are to ban mobile phones. It's a result of fears that camera phones are being used for taking compromising changing-room snaps. Hopes are that the measure will ensure the privacy of both adults and children.

→ South Korea's first sex museum has opened in an attempt to counter Internet porn. The Asia Eros museum in Seoul exhibits items ranging from old risqué coins to phallic symbols, with an emphasis on education. Bizarrely, it hopes to eradicate seedier material found online.



At last, a health benefit in using mobile phones

X marks the spot

PICTURE PHONES COULD SERIOUSLY BENEFIT YOUR HEALTH, WITH MEDICAL STAFF FINDING GOOD USE FOR THE HANDY SNAPPERS

WELSH DOCTORS ARE taking the reduction of patients' waiting time literally into their own hands.

Camera-equipped mobile phones are being used by staff at Royal Glamorgan Hospital in Llantrisant to forward images of X-rays to other doctors. This simple tactic has greatly reduced diagnosis times, as busy specialists can quickly view the messages and instruct junior doctors on how to proceed. In the past, there would be no alternative but to resort to expensive methods like sending X-ray copies by telex or taxi transit.

In a recent case of a complicated fracture, specialist registrar David Baker highlighted the benefits: "By being able to send the image down the line to my consultant, he was able to tell me which course of treatment he preferred."

This has even led to a formal trial being conducted, and those involved remain extremely encouraged about future use.

"On a day-to-day basis, it's very helpful, because the consultant is often not in the hospital," explains Baker.

Forget broadband

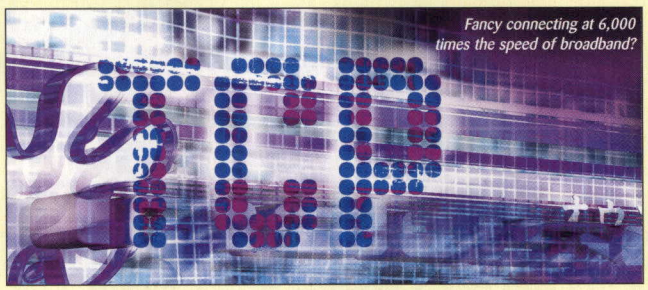
US SCIENTISTS CLAIM TO HAVE DEVELOPED AN INTERNET CONNECTION THAT MAKES BROADBAND SEEM PEDESTRIAN

WHAT HAS AN average transmission of 925 megabits per second, and is 6,000 times faster than broadband? Answer: Fast TCP.

Fast TCP may sound like a new brand of quick-healing antiseptic, but US scientists claim it could be the ultimate in speedy connections. Developed by Steven Low and a team at Pasadena's Caltech Institute, the new technology dwarfs the average rate of standard TCP by a whopping 659Mbs.

However, its most exciting feature is its ability to exist on the current Internet infrastructure. Reports suggest that researchers have actually recorded data transfer speeds of up to 8.6Gbps by combining 10 Fast TCP systems, and successfully tested transmission over 10,000 kilometres.

Disney and Microsoft are already rumoured to be in discussions with Caltech over Fast TCP's potential for video streaming.



Fancy connecting at 6,000 times the speed of broadband?

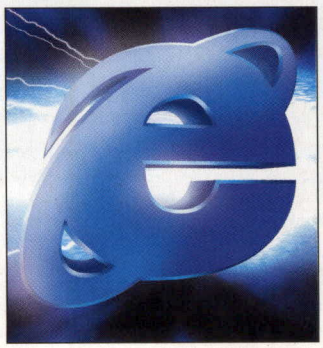
Mac IE no more

MICROSOFT REVEALS THAT ITS POPULAR BROWSER WILL NO LONGER BE UPDATED FOR MAC

NEW VERSIONS OF the widely-used Internet Explorer software will cease to make an appearance on the Mac platform, Microsoft has announced.

It comes after Apple's own launch of its Safari browser, which it claims runs Web content faster and better than the rest. The preliminary beta version was released in January and coincided with the fulfilment of a five-year development contract with Microsoft. However, the Mac will continue to see a wide range of Microsoft's flagship Office spreadsheet and productivity products made available: "We're committed as ever to the Mac platform," insists product manager Jessica Sommer.

There was also confirmation that both parties were working together to address compatibility issues, with fears that Safari could struggle against Microsoft's dominance. IE boasts a 95 percent market share, and Mac users may well worry about accessing content with a minority browser.



Mac users are going to have to kiss goodbye to that old familiar logo soon

WORLD CLASS SOLUTIONS

ADSL Broadband
- FAST 5 working day activation
- FREE Email Account
- FREE Web Hosting
- FREE Backup Dialup Account
- MAJOR price reductions

Web Hosting from £49.00 p.a.
- FREE Domain Name included
- Free Unlimited Use Of Dial-Up Facility
- 50MB of webspace
- 20 Email POP3 Accounts
- MANY more benefits, too many to list check our website for FULL details

Virtual ISP from £100.00 p.a.
- YOUR OWN Branded Holding Pages, Branded Logs & Statistics, Branded WebMail Facility
- Free Unlimited Use Of Dial-Up Facility
- Virtual Control Panel Facility
- Automated Domain Store !!!
- MANY more benefits, too many to list check our website for FULL details

Dedicated & CoLo from £89.00 p.m.
- Dedicated Servers. We can offer you the full solution when it comes to owning your own dedicated system. From supply & build right up to backup and support.
- Co-Located Servers. Why not co-locate your own server with us and reap the benefits? Connected to our fast Cisco routed network infrastructure your server will benefit from our extensive services.

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EliteUKServe.Net

iCandy

Take a look at this collection of top toys

No T-phone fake

Not content with watching episodes of *Jerry Springer* and *Friends* before us, the Americans are now beating us Brits to it on the phone front. T-Mobile's latest baby, which has just been launched Stateside, comes with a full QWERTY keyboard concealed beneath its 65,000 colour screen. This allows for all manner of instant messaging shenanigans via the integrated AIM application.

Product: T-Mobile Sidekick
URL: www.t-mobile.com
Telephone: N/A

£TBA

i me a river

MP3 players seem to be shrinking faster than Michael Jackson's wallet, and this little wonder is one of the smallest we've seen. The iFP-180T belies its tiny stature and is packed with 128Mb of space for your tunes along with an integrated FM tuner so you need never miss an episode of *The Archers* again.

Product: iRiver iFP-180T Digital Music Player
URL: www.iriver.com
Email: sales@iriver.com

£149.99

The naked aip

Proving that you don't need a Hollywood-style budget to make your own digital movies, this cheeky little camcorder from Aiptek promises decent quality video footage for just over a ton. The microscopic DV3100 comes with a sharp 1.5-inch TFT colour LCD display, up to 3-megapixel resolution, a 2x digital zoom, and supports Compact Flash Cards up to 512 Mb .

Product: Aiptek Pocket DV3100
URL: www.nifty-gadgets.net
Email: info@nifty-gadgets.net

£119.99

Power ranger

Set to become Canon's flagship compact, the G5 promises the sort of photographic power you'd normally only see in a high-end SLR. The 5.0-megapixel digicam isn't all brawn and no brains either, and includes some intelligent features to give you more control over your snaps. As well as a speedy 4x optical zoom, the G5 comes with a rotatable 1.8-inch LCD screen and 12 different shooting modes to get your teeth into.

Product: Canon PowerShot G5
URL: www.canon.co.uk/digitalcameras
Telephone: 0870 514 3723

£679

Boxing clever

How's this for the ultimate couch potato's toolkit? Netgem's iPlayer is a set-top box which allows you to access Freeview and the Net via your TV. As well as giving you the opportunity to veg out in front of a multitude of free TV and radio stations, the unit gives you a host of online options including the ability to connect to a home network and share a broadband ADSL connection via a USB-Ethernet adapter. It even comes with a funky wireless keyboard.

Product: Netgem i-Player
URL: www.netgem.com
Telephone: 0870 366 7055

£129.99

Prints charming

While printers aren't normally noted for turning heads, this classy device from Epson cuts a fine figure. The Stylus Photo 950 claims to be the first in its class to offer a two-picolitre dot size for even finer prints, and includes an automatic paper cutter and catcher. It also boasts a new Epson printer head with a higher nozzle count for warp-speed printing at resolutions up to 2,880dpi.

Product: Epson Stylus 950
URL: www.epson.co.uk
Telephone: 0800 220546

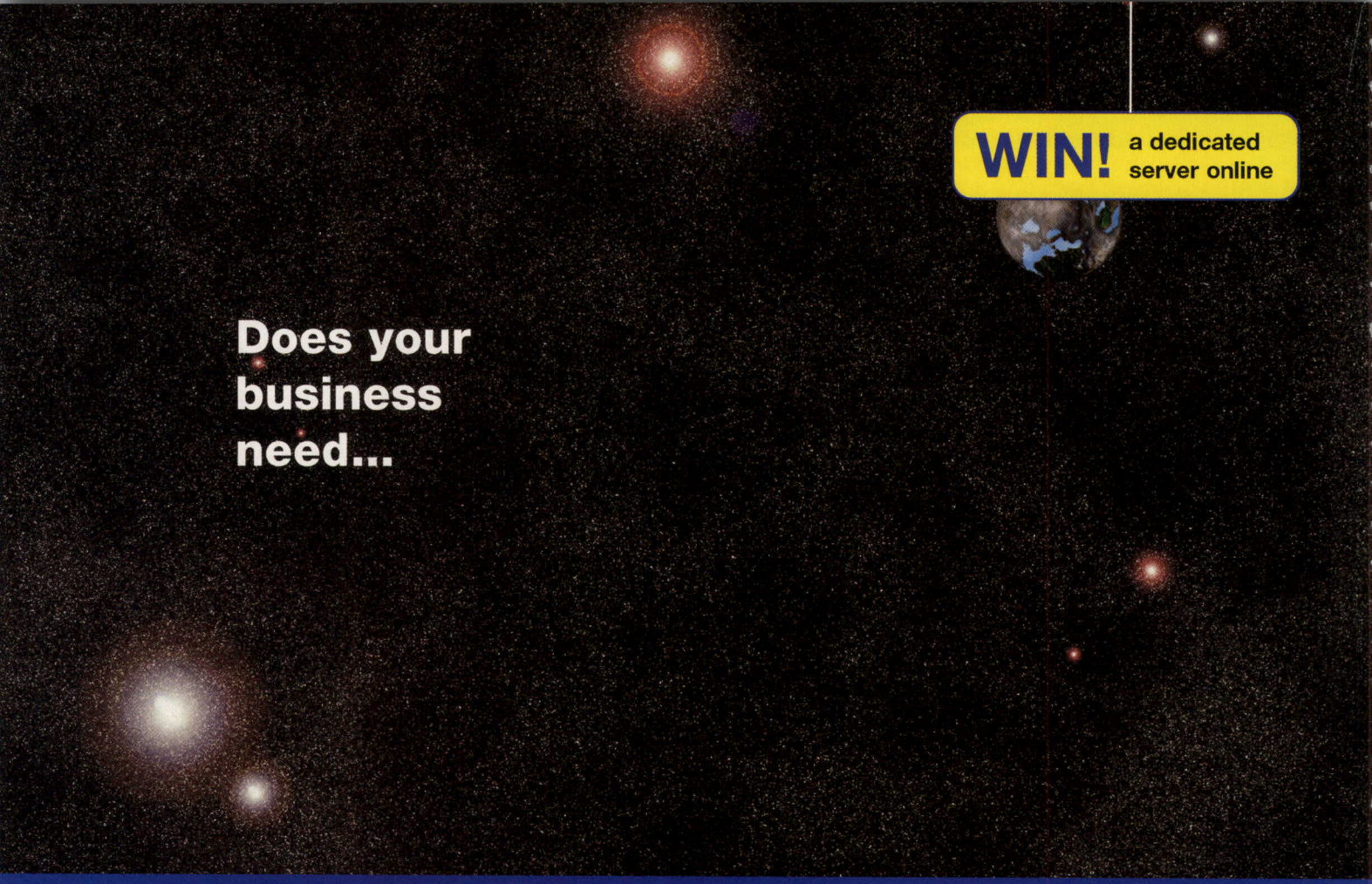
£349

Walk like a man

Walkmans have matured considerably since the first portable cassette players fizzed onto the scene in the Eighties. In the days when people sat listening to A-ha and Ultravox through a pair of orange fuzzy headphones, you would have choked on your Marathon bar had someone told you you could store up to 490 tracks of music on one disc. That's what's happened though, as the software supplied with Sony's new ATRAC CD Walkman products allows you to store and play up to 30 CD's worth of music on one CD-R/RW.

Product: Sony D-NE1 ATRAC CD Walkman
URL: www.sony.co.uk
Telephone: 020 7365 2947

£160 approx



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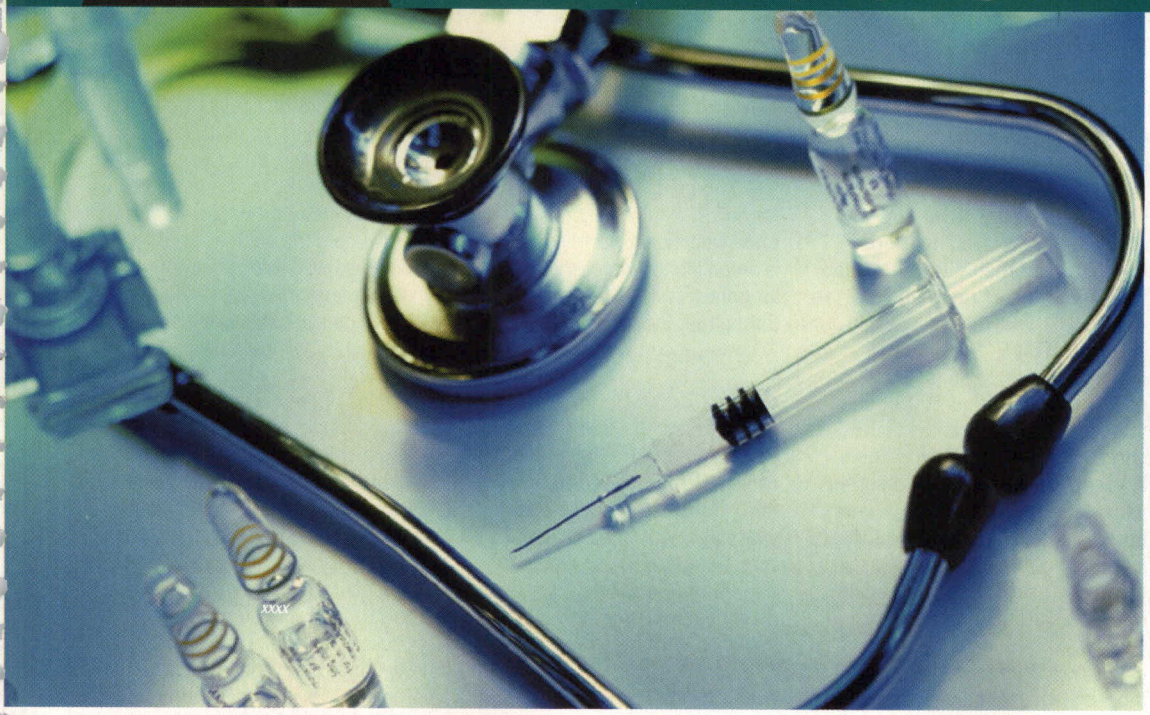


LETTER OF THE MONTH

Doctor doctor

I AM WRITING regarding a recent review of my Web site (**www.nicks-art.co.uk**) in issue 79. I received a good thrashing from your Design Doctor, which at the time I thought was a little harsh. After all it was my first attempt (sorry I'm getting defensive). After banging my head against the wall repeatedly in shame (well, I should know better), I licked my wounds, had a serious word with myself and decided to think positive and set the challenge of re-designing my online art portfolio.

Following your advice on 'keeping it simple', I set to work and within three days nicks-art.co.uk was almost complete. The Design Doctor's advice certainly did make the re-creation simple enough.

I discarded most of the overpowering Flash animations and made sure it would look acceptable on different screen configurations. Now it's complete, I can fully understand why the Design Doctor came to his chilling conclusions and I would like to thank him for not glossing over what was a poorly designed Web site. So could you pass this letter on to the relevant people and invite them to take a peek at the latest incarnation of **www.nicks-art.co.uk**. I know it'll never be perfect, but I would be grateful to receive any feedback, good or bad. I really enjoy your publication – it caters for the discerning amateur and professional alike. I'm always first in the queue for the latest copy and yes I will start subscribing... honest.

Nick Cooley

James Seabright, who might just bear an uncanny resemblance to the Design Doctor, has expressed his delight. He admits that this is the first piece of fan mail the Design Doctor has ever had, although fans of James' theatrical endeavours won't be surprised to hear of his popularity. More than anything, though, we're all chuffed that the Doc's advice has helped you improve your site from top to bottom. It's especially that you've taken the criticism constructively and made accordingly changes. Just to make you an even happier *Practical Internet* reader, we're sending you a copy of the excellent PhotoImpact 8 to get your teeth into.

The new improved version of the Nicks Art Web site is well worth a visit

Disappointed from Cornwall

I have been an avid reader of *Practical Internet* for some time, have had letters published and even got letter of the month award on one occasion. However, I am getting a little worried regarding some of your recent content. You do seem to be struggling to fill the publication. Pages such as 'Worst sites' and 'Sites to avoid', etc have no place in a publication of your standing. Also, some of the advice given is very contradictory. One moment it's 'Fill your Web site with text', then the next it's 'Here's software to glitz it with loads of Flash and, would you believe, video!'

This month we have two pages devoted to an online calculator with JavaScript so we can add and subtract, then two more to create a product catalogue with PHP and MySQL. What use is the first, and why not use one of the zillion catalogue software products for the second?

Finally (and no, I did not get out of bed on the wrong side this morning), in your review of 4D 6.7 on the CD, you say and I quote: 'For many the promise of untold Web riches rang true'. Okay, name them. The only ones to get rich are those who managed to persuade people and institutions with more money than sense to invest in them. The sites themselves have not made profits, even those with the greatest exposure.

Phew! Got that off my chest and look forward to the next edition with interest.

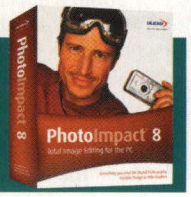
Terry Butcher

Regular readers will know of Terry's previous letters to *Practical Internet*, so it's a bit of a shock to hear that you're not happy with the magazine, Terry. With regard to your point about 'Worst sites' and the like, we're trying to show the underside of the Net in hopefully a light-hearted and fun way. The confusion you feel over Web design is a common one, though – do you go for the 'smaller is better' route, or do you opt for an all-singing, all-dancing site filled with Flash and the like? We feel our readers will benefit

WIN A PRIZE

Not only do you get the immense satisfaction of having your letter printed in the UK's fastest growing Internet magazine, but every month one of our letter writers wins a great prize. Yes, if you write in to us at the address above, you stand a chance of winning a copy of PhotoImpact 8, Ulead's envelope-pushing graphics package.

We reviewed PhotoImpact 8 in Issue 74, and loved it so much that we awarded it the coveted *Practical Internet* Star Buy award. Worth a cool £89.99, this is one of the best image manipulation programs around. To find out more about PhotoImpact 8, pop along to www.ulead.co.uk or phone 01327 844755.

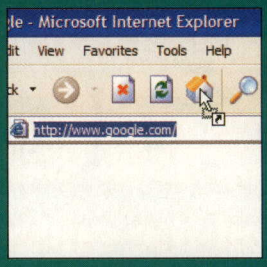


Reader's tip

Faster home pages

Everyone should know the keyboard shortcut for making a Web page part of your Favorites list (CTRL+D), but I couldn't figure out how to make something my home page without having to mess around for ages. Thankfully, I've found the answer to my problems – all you have to do is drag the funny symbol to the left of the URL on the Address Bar onto the Home Page icon in the main toolbar, and it will be configured as your start page.

Tim Wardlaw



Your letters

Perfect fusion

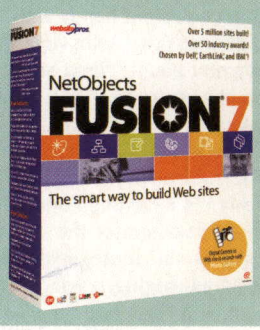
Many thanks for a very interesting magazine and superb cover discs. Issue 43's Cover CD gave me the opportunity and incentive to build my own Web site, as you 'gave away' a copy of NetObjects Fusion 2 Web-authoring software. Imagine my amazement when Issue 80 (three years later!) allowed me to upgrade with a full version of NetObjects Fusion 4. Now on that basis, in about three years' time I guess, you will put on Issue 116 another full version of the current version 7!

Now I have used and enjoyed the software so much, I have responded to your offer and paid up my money and purchased the version 7 upgrade. I feel it is only fair to do this as the software is so well written that I should be totally British about the whole thing and show my appreciation.

Keep up the good work on the magazine.

Tony Sweatman

We're glad to hear that you loved our copy of NetObjects Fusion so much that you shelled out for the full version. We're sure it's also encouraging for the people at NetObjects to know that their product is so good that you're prepared to pay for something when you could soldier on with a free version. Enjoy NetObjects Fusion 7, and please keep us informed of your greatest achievements with the program.



from hearing about both methods, so we try to give you a bit of each. Hopefully, the past couple of issues have been much more up your street, Terry. If you, or any other readers, have any more queries, drop the Editor a line and we'll try and sort them out.

Searching shocker

In your 'Search engines' article on page 51 of your June 2003 issue, there is a sentence which states: 'A cunning tip is to put a block of keywords in small type and set the ink colour the same as the background colour, so they appear invisible on the page'. This was a technique used by search engine optimisers around two to four years ago.

It is now probably one of the most blatant spamming techniques, and is seriously frowned upon by search engines. Google is currently redesigning and testing its search algorithms, and hidden text is one of the illegal techniques it is trying to catch more easily.

Another spamming technique promoted by this sentence in this article is 'keyword stuffing', which is stuffing your HTML pages with keywords.

A good online resource to use for any SEO information is **www.webmasterworld.com**. This is an online forum for the major Webmasters and SEO companies throughout the world. Good luck.

Chris Fryer, CMF Web design

It's the best search engine around, so it's a good idea to comply with Google's regulations!

Cheers for that tip-off Chris. We seem to have let that one slip through the net – our only excuse is that it used to be a fairly standard practice a few years ago. Anything that will turn Google off your site is a bad thing in our book, so we're firmly against any kind of keyword stuffing from now on.

Accessibility issues

I read with great interest your reply to Dave Brinkman's letter concerning Web site accessibility in June's edition of *Practical Internet*. Although I understand your comment about people's desire to fight against anything they are forced to do, Web site inaccessibility has actually been caused (in part) by bad/sloppy software development techniques.

My company, Wide Welcome Ltd, specialises in the assessment of corporate Web sites with the visually impaired in mind. We have assessed the sites of both small and very large household name companies, and a large percentage of the issues we find on Web sites are due to programmers cuttings corners, such as hard coding text size values, leaving Alt-text off important graphics, and using graphical representations of text when they should have used actual text. These are but a few examples of the bad programming we have found.

You mentioned in your reply to Mr Brinkman that you would bring any new changes in the law to the notice of your readership. Firstly, the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has launched a formal investigation of 1,000 UK Web sites spanning the public and private sectors (at **www.drc.gov.uk**), and in addition, the European Commission is preparing a directive that will force member states to introduce new laws covering online access by October 2004.

Chris Shaw

Accessibility is an issue that's becoming increasingly important, as can be seen by the changing attitude of the letters we get in the *Practical Internet* postbag every month. It seems that new laws are passed weekly, so we're always grateful to people like Chris for making sure we're bang up to date with the latest developments.

Attachment of the month

We have no idea why we like it, but for some reason we really enjoy this picture of a dolphin leaping majestically through the air with a cow. Still, in an age of increasingly impressive multimedia, it's good to know that a fake picture of a cow in a ludicrous situation tickles our fancy. Cheers to Ben Williams for sending this to us.

Have you picked up a hilarious or strange email attachment? Would you like to share it with your fellow *Practical Internet* readers? Send it to **pi@paragon.co.uk** with the subject header 'Attachment of the month'. We'll print the best one in the mag each month.

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GOLD PLUS	Yes	200	6	30	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	1	2	0	£19.95
PLATINUM	Yes	500	10	50	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	2	2	1	£49.95
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DESTROY ALL-KNOWN VIRUSES

ALEX WADDINGTON CUTS THROUGH THE HYPE TO TELL YOU HOW DANGEROUS VIRUSES REALLY ARE, AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO AVOID THEM

The wreckage from a plane crash lies strewn over scorched earth across the UK, the result of an air traffic control system that abruptly shut down. The roads in all major towns and cities are blocked with abandoned cars, as traffic lights flicker meaninglessly. There's no domestic electricity, no telephone system, no food in the supermarkets and no access to money because every cash machine only shows a blank screen. Welcome to the aftermath of one devastating computer virus that has brought the world to its knees.

This is pretty much what anti-virus software companies would like us to believe might happen if we don't buy their latest super-strength products – and then keep shelling out for regular updates. But in reality, the doomsday scenario outlined above is about as likely as Tony Blair reforming his college band The Ugly Rumours, with Saddam Hussein on lead vocals and Osama bin Laden on bass.

Of course, the highly-paid consultants on the software vendors' payrolls will point to the impact of high-profile nasties such as SQL Slammer, which actually managed to freeze banking networks and airline systems for a brief period. Back in 2001, one expert even stated that he believed someone 'could die' as a result of a virus. But so far it hasn't happened. We investigate the world of viruses to see if it could happen, and take a look at how you can make your PC watertight against even the toughest of viral attacks.

What is a virus?

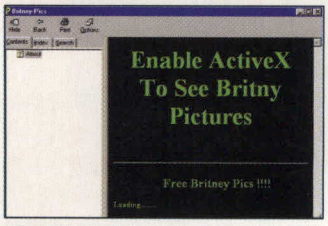
Perhaps one of the major reasons that people get so edgy and worried about computer viruses is because of the word itself, which is Latin in origin and means 'slime' or 'poisonous liquid'. There's also the association with human viruses such as SARS or Ebola. It's hardly surprising, then, that when the world starts talking excitedly about the latest virus doing the rounds, rational people start to wince and worry.

It's difficult to define a computer virus in a handy soundbite, as they come in so many different forms. But in general when people in the industry talk about computer viruses, they are referring to computer code deliberately designed to destroy and corrupt information and cause disruption.

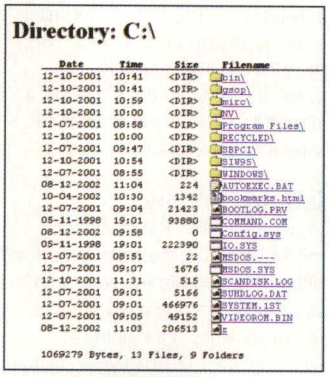
Modern computer viruses stem from the introduction of the IBM PC in the early Eighties. By the end of the decade – in the US, at least – PCs were commonplace in offices, homes and universities, and pretty soon unscrupulous programmers saw the opportunity for mischief. Along came 'Trojan horse' viruses, posing as legitimate programs. When one of these programs was run, it would do something nasty like erase all the information stored on a computer.

Early viruses

The other virus threat at this time was from malicious code that 'piggybacked' on legitimate programs. When an afflicted program was executed, the virus sprang into life and infected other programs, which would also spread the infection when opened. The user would never know about these



It looks like an obvious virus, but many people will still click to install dangerous plug-ins



Viruses like Bugbear wreak havoc on the innocent victim's computer

infections, as the software in question ran as usual. As most programs at this time were small enough to fit on a floppy disk, viruses were often unwittingly passed on from user to user. These early viruses would sometimes deliver a surprise on certain dates or after being run a number of times, which could be anything from an odd message to the destruction of data.

An email virus arrives in the form of an attachment, and when opened or executed will infect a PC. The first component of this type of virus is a payload of some type, such as the destruction of data. Particularly nasty ones – such as Badtrans in 2001 – incorporate keylogger programs that record and steal passwords and credit card information. The second part is a reproductive element, which sees the virus pick recipients from an email address book and distribute itself without the user's knowledge.

In some instances, email viruses have taken advantage of security loopholes in Outlook and Outlook Express to automatically execute when an infected message is viewed. But in most cases, computer users must actually click on an attachment to cause the infection. In a bid to encourage people to do this, virus authors have started injecting some psychology into their programming.

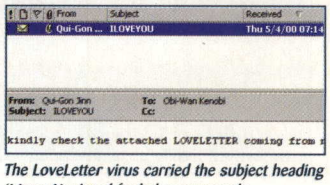
"Virus authors have started injecting some psychology into their programming"

As time went on, virus authors learned new tricks and developed boot sector viruses. These were particularly effective, as they were guaranteed to be executed every time a floppy disk was read or a computer was started up. In colleges, where lots of people shared the same machine, these boot sector viruses spread like wildfire.

Modern threats

Today, the threat from Trojan horses, simple piggyback and boot sector viruses is pretty insignificant, due to the death of floppy disks and the development of more secure Operating Systems. The real threat comes from email worm viruses, which have the capacity to spread themselves rapidly.

With the subject heading 'I Love You', the email carrying the LoveLetter virus was eagerly received by thousands of Internet users in 2000. Unfortunately, the accompanying declaration of affection turned out to be a malicious program that overwrote files with certain extensions, highlighting the fact that people should think with their head rather than their heart (or in some cases, their groin) before opening an email attachment.


From Subject Received
Qui-Gon ... ILOVEYOU Thu 5/4/00 07:14
From: Qui-Gon Jinn To: Obi-Wan Kenobi
Subject: ILOVEYOU Cc:
kindly check the attached LOVELETTER coming from

The LoveLetter virus carried the subject heading 'I Love You' and fooled many people

A brief history of viruses

October 1987
The first PC virus is detected on computers at the University of Delaware. Affecting the boot sector of floppy disks, the Brain virus was developed in Pakistan and occupied unused space on infected disks.

August 1995
The first widespread macro virus – known as 'Concept' – appears. Providing the model for many future viruses, it clings to Word documents and spreads when infected files are opened.

March 1999
A new age of viruses is marked by the release of combined macro and email worm virus Melissa, which infects thousands of users worldwide and plays havoc with the email systems of large companies.

May 2000
The LoveLetter virus grabs global headlines as it spreads like wildfire. It uses psychology to entice Internet users to open infected files attached to emails with the subject heading 'I Love You'.

June 2000
The first virus to affect mobile phones is identified. Spreading itself via email, the virus bombards mobile phone users with annoying but harmless SMS messages.

September 2000
The first virus that targets Palm handheld computers is discovered. The virus has the ability to spread through the sharing of files, but the risk of infection is described as low.

November 2001
The password-stealing Badtrans worm virus exploits a security flaw in Outlook and Outlook Express to automatically execute itself. It blows apart the myth that infection can only occur when malicious email attachments are manually opened.

May 2002
The Klez-H worm virus is declared to be the worst virus ever by MessageLabs, which blocked 20,000 infected emails a day. Its 'success' lies in the fact that it arrives in many different guises.

Who are the virus writers?

When most people think of computer miscreants, they picture anaemic, nocturnal young males with no girlfriend, a lack of social skills, a love of pizza and a taste for hard trance or heavy rock music. In reality, virus programmers come in all shapes and sizes. Some are in their late twenties, while others are pushing retirement age. Many are married or have girlfriends. Some are even female. However, the vast majority of virus writers do tend to be males in their teens or early twenties, working in the IT industry or studying at university.

But what motivates these people to produce programs that wreck so much precious data? According to Sarah Gordon, a researcher at IBM who has been profiling virus writers since 1992, virus coders shouldn't necessarily be considered the electronic equivalent of the mindless vandals who smash up bus shelters. "Most virus coders are well-adjusted youths who have normal relationships with their family and friends and intend no real harm with the viruses they write," she told a US computer magazine back in 2001.

Geeky thrills

Many are simply programmers looking for a serious challenge – and also maybe looking to prove that one guy sitting in his bedroom can outsmart a team of highly paid programmers and researchers employed by an anti-virus company.

One virus writer called MidNyte says that writing standard software applications, as he was taught to in college, bores him. "The idea of a little program that can make a copy of itself, even when watched by software designed to stop it, intrigues me," he says. "I try to write something that can evade this software."

Many authors like MidNyte never release their viruses into the wild and say they have no wish to damage other people's computers and information. Instead, they submit them to anti-virus companies, which then update their software accordingly. When this happens, a virus author gets a great sense of satisfaction and pride.

Infamy, infamy

Virus writers also like to receive recognition from their peers, and will often happily share the code with virus collectors and other authors. But most, while not wishing to distribute their destructive creations themselves, refuse to accept any responsibility for what others may do with their work. The attitude is that if someone chooses to turn their code into a real virus and unleash it upon the world, that's their affair.

Of course, some writers find the idea of their handiwork slowing the Net and causing big companies to shut down their systems too much to resist, and release their viruses into the public domain. They get a buzz from seeing the fast spread reported in the media, though in the aftermath many express regret for the damage caused. Some seem genuinely surprised at the effectiveness of their creations and afterwards claim they never foresaw such disruptive consequences. Others blame PC users' stupidity and ignorance, and refuse to view the creation and distribution of viruses as wrong.

Too cool for school

As to how these people learn to write viruses, the most common way seems to be learning from others. Source code for existing viruses is widely available on the Web, and programmers can quickly learn from these pieces of code. Special virus-writing tools are also available, such as the Visual Basic Worm Generator, which was used to write the Anna Kournikova virus. What's more, a new course at the University of Calgary in Canada (**www.ucalgary.ca**) will soon be teaching undergraduates how to recreate existing viruses.

Where do viruses come from?

Virus: .....LoveLetter
Origin: .....Philippines
First detected: .....May 2000
Seriousness: .....☠☠☠☠☠

Virus: .....Klez
Origin: .....China
First detected: .....October 2001
Seriousness: .....☠☠☠☠☠

Virus: .....Melissa
Origin: .....United States
First detected: .....March 1999
Seriousness: .....☠☠☠☠☠

Virus: .....Sircam
Origin: .....Mexico
First detected: .....July 2001
Seriousness: .....☠☠☠☠☠

Virus: .....Code Red
Origin: .....China
First detected: .....July 2001
Seriousness: .....☠☠☠☠☠

Virus: .....Anna Kournikova
Origin: .....Holland
First detected: .....February 2001
Seriousness: .....☠☠☠☠☠

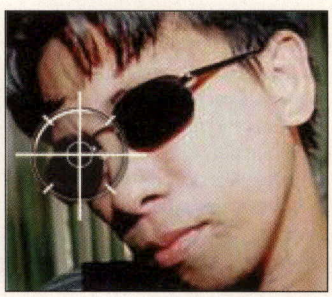
Notorious virus writers

Name: David Smith
Virus: Melissa

Using a stolen AOL account, Smith posted the first major email worm virus to a sex newsgroup in December 1999. The American named the virus after a stripper, and although not destructive, its rapid reproduction forced companies such as Intel and Microsoft to shut down their email systems, and it caused $80m worth of damage. Smith was eventually jailed for 20 months and fined $5,000.

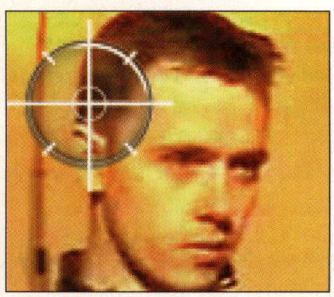
Name: Onel de Guzman
Virus: LoveLetter

Although never prosecuted, 25-year-old Guzman is generally accepted as the author of the fast-spreading email worm virus. Manila-based computer student Guzman was arrested by Philippine authorities, but released because legislation didn't exist to convict him. He admits to being involved in 'cooking' the destructive nasty, which infected at least 15 million computers across the globe.



Name: Simon Vallor
Viruses: Gokar, Admirer and RedesiB

The 22-year-old was jailed for two years at the beginning of 2003 after being found guilty of releasing viruses under Section Three of the Computer Misuse Act 1990. Vallor created and released malicious code from his home in Llandudno, North Wales, and was caught when he boasted about his efforts in Net chat rooms. His destructive viruses are thought to have seized up 27,000 computers in 42 countries.



Worst-case scenario

A book called The Doomsday Virus was recently released which centres around the exploits of a 'brilliant but warped' computer hacker who creates a 'virtually unstoppable' virus, designed to paralyse the entire US computing infrastructure. According to the press blurb, this is a timely and topical book with an 'all-too-possible plot'. But this kind of horror story isn't just confined to the bookshelf. It's the type of message some anti-virus software vendors are all-too-happy for us to believe.

If you believe certain sections of the IT security community, we are at serious risk from 'electronic Pearl Harbour' – a computer-based attack that would cause massive amounts of destruction and loss of life. In a worst-case scenario, such an attack would target power distribution, financial services, emergency call services and air traffic control systems. But haven't we heard all these apocryphal warnings before? Back in 1992, anti-virus software company employees talked up the likely impact of the Michelangelo birthday virus in the media, and sold lots of extra products in the process.

When the big day arrived, only around 20,000 machines were infected – not the five million that had been predicted by the 'experts'. Similarly, when the Kournikova virus was first identified, eager PR people representing anti-virus firms rang journalists with the news that the world had a new LoveLetter on its hands. It turned out to be nothing of the sort – and frantic warnings in 2001 about how the Code Red virus might bring the Internet to a halt turned out to be similarly baseless.

Firms like Computer Associates offer security solutions to large-scale companies

Don't panic

Hysterical warnings like these only serve to cause unnecessary alarm and often do more harm than good. For example, users may panic if their computer does something unusual, and hastily start deleting programs and files. As a result, they have to waste a lot of time reinstalling software and recovering from their own actions, when in fact they never had a virus in the first place. Hyped-up virus alerts also often cause people to rush out and waste money on new anti-virus products, when all they need do is update their existing software.

The reality is that a scenario where the Internet crashes, every computer locks up and civilisation as we know it goes into meltdown belongs firmly in science fiction books. For starters, the fact that not everyone uses the same Operating System means a virus wouldn't be able to spread unchecked across millions of computers. A piece of code that managed to corrupt a PC wouldn't be able to do the same to a Mac or a computer running the Linux Operating System.

It should also be noted that the systems used to run and maintain important parts of our infrastructure are protected by expensive, high-tech security. Our electricity supply, for example, is not controlled using a bog-standard PC running Windows XP and a copy of Norton Antivirus linked up to a budget-price BT broadband connection.

"The likelihood of the UK's infrastructure crashing down is extremely small"

The insider's verdict

In short, the likelihood of the UK's entire infrastructure coming crashing down due to the malicious actions of cyber terrorists is extremely small. But what do those working in the anti-virus industry think? Is there too much hype or are the doom and gloom warnings justified?

Simon Perry is vice-president and security strategist at Computer Associates, which provides security solutions to businesses of all sizes. He says that since moving to the UK from the company's New York office, he's been amazed by the way smaller anti-virus software vendors hype up virus threats.

"I can only think that because they are smaller players, in the absence of a marketing budget this is how they seek to promote themselves," says Perry, adding that he views this approach as highly detrimental. "I think anti-virus should be something you set and forget. It's just a tool you use. There are far bigger security issues today."

Head to head

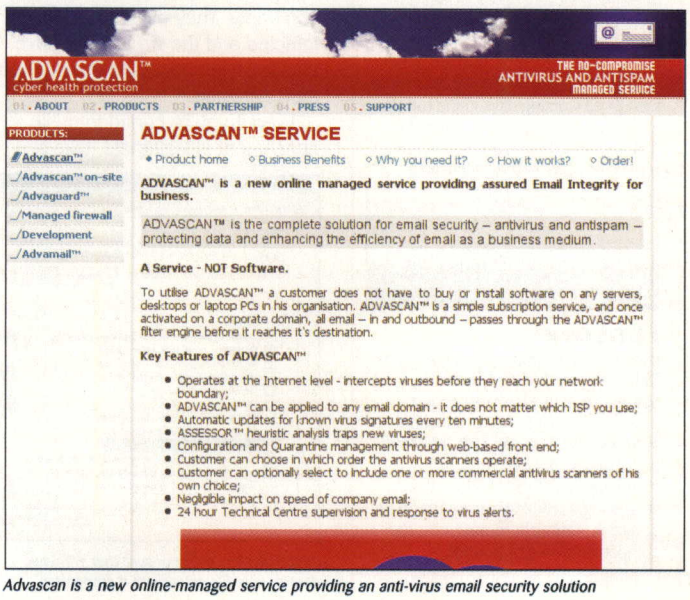
SIMON PERRY
Vice-president and security strategist at Computer Associates

"I think anti-virus should be something you set and forget. You should think about it as much as you think about email. It's just a tool you use. But because of all this hype, people are focusing far too much on anti-virus, and there are far bigger security issues today."

ROY WALKER
CEO of Advascan

"The scope for damage nowadays is severe. Personal and financial information becomes accessible. Business trade secrets easily fall into the wrong hands. Companies bring down the networks of their trading partners because basic precautions were not taken. The list goes on."

In contrast, Roy Walker, CEO of Advascan, which provides an anti-virus email security solution, says we still face a very serious threat from malicious code. "While some 'traditional' viruses may not do much more that make your PC go wobbly, do strange things on a certain date or delete files at random, the scope for damage nowadays is severe."


ADVASCAN™
cyber health protection
THE NO-COMPROMISE ANTIVIRUS AND ANTISPAM MANAGED SERVICE
01. ABOUT 02. PRODUCTS 03. PARTNERSHIP 04. PRESS 05. SUPPORT
PRODUCTS:
Advascan™
Advascan™ on-site
Advaguard™
Managed firewall
Development
Advamail™
ADVASCAN™ SERVICE
Product home Business Benefits Why you need it? How it works? Order!
ADVASCAN™ is a new online managed service providing assured Email Integrity for business.
ADVASCAN™ is the complete solution for email security – antivirus and antispam – protecting data and enhancing the efficiency of email as a business medium.
A Service - NOT Software.
To utilise ADVASCAN™ a customer does not have to buy or install software on any servers, desktops or laptop PCs in his organisation. ADVASCAN™ is a simple subscription service, and once activated on a corporate domain, all email – in and outbound – passes through the ADVASCAN™ filter engine before it reaches it's destination.
Key Features of ADVASCAN™
Operates at the Internet level - intercepts viruses before they reach your network boundary;
ADVASCAN™ can be applied to any email domain - it does not matter which ISP you use;
Automatic updates for known virus signatures every ten minutes;
ASSESSOR™ heuristic analysis traps new viruses;
Configuration and Quarantine management through web-based front end;
Customer can choose in which order the antivirus scanners operate;
Customer can optionally select to include one or more commercial antivirus scanners of his own choice;
Negligible impact on speed of company email;
24 hour Technical Centre supervision and response to virus alerts.

Advascan is a new online-managed service providing an anti-virus email security solution

The common-sense approach

What's the worst that can happen?

SQL Slammer bashes cash machines

Back in January of this year, the SQL Slammer virus spread rapidly by exploiting a security flaw in Microsoft SQL Server – a platform used by many large businesses to run important applications. Although not harmful, the virus's worm-like properties prompted a tremendous increase in Internet traffic and caused the Bank of America's network of 13,000 ATM machines to freeze for several hours.

MoD sustains virus blast

An unnamed virus forced the Ministry of Defence to shut down an entire IT system at its Abbey Wood offices near Bristol earlier this year. The system at the complex, which deals mainly with defence procurement, was offline for at least three working days in the run-up to Easter. The MoD stressed the virus had no effect on personnel in active service or other Ministry networks.

FunLove

Back in 1999, computer manufacturer Dell was forced to shut down operations at its Limerick, Ireland, plant for two days after production systems were infected with the tame but resilient FunLove virus. In response, Dell decided to recall a staggering 12,000 systems. The virus outbreak is thought to have cost the company millions of pounds.

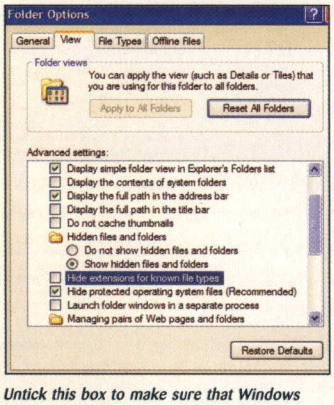
Anti-virus software firms would like us to believe the only way to prevent viruses is to install their products. But this simply isn't true; anti-virus programs can only be updated after a new virus has been identified. To be fair, the leading companies usually develop and issue free software updates very smartly when new threats are identified. Modern software also incorporates heuristic virus detection, which increases the chances of new viruses being picked up. But even so, a nasty piece of code can still be missed by your anti-virus package.

So what else can you do to protect yourself? Well, there's plenty – and most of it comes down to using your mouse and paying a little more attention to what arrives in your inbox.

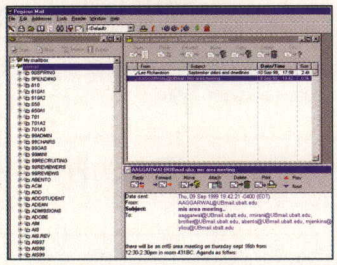
Suspicious minds

Given that the most common way to get infected is via email, treat every email you receive with suspicion – especially those bearing attachments. The best approach is to delete all unsolicited emails, and certainly never open anything that comes tagged onto them. Also be wary of emails with attachments that purport to come from people you know. They may have been infected and the virus might have emailed itself out automatically from their machine.

Even if you're confident a file attachment is legitimate, take a close look at the name of the file before you go ahead and open it. Files ending in **.exe**, **.vbs**, **.scr**, **.pif**, **.com**, **.bat** and **.dll** are more than likely viruses, and should be deleted immediately. Don't forget that once scrubbed, suspicious emails should also be removed from your Deleted Items folder in Outlook and Outlook Express.


Folder Options
General
View
File Types
Offline Files
Folder views
You can apply the view (such as Details or Tiles) that you are using for this folder to all folders.
Apply to All Folders
Reset All Folders
Advanced settings:
Display simple folder view in Explorer's Folders list
Display the contents of system folders
Display the full path in the address bar
Display the full path in the title bar
Do not cache thumbnails
Hidden files and folders
Do not show hidden files and folders
Show hidden files and folders
Hide extensions for known file types
Hide protected operating system files (Recommended)
Launch folder windows in a separate process
Managing pairs of Web pages and folders
Restore Defaults

Untick this box to make sure that Windows doesn't hide file extensions it recognises



Try using an alternative email program such as Pegasus to reduce the risk of infection

While on the subject of extensions, it should also be noted that many people have fallen for the 'double extension' trick, which was employed by the author of the Anna Kournikova virus. In this instance, a file named 'AnnaKournikova.jpg.vbs' appeared at first glance to be a JPEG image of the glamorous tennis player. In actual fact it was a virus, and if computer users had looked closer they would have seen the telltale '**.vbs**' extension that indicated something nefarious.

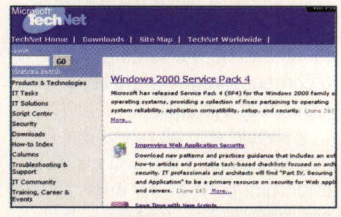
So look carefully before you click, and also make sure your copy of Windows isn't configured to hide extensions it recognises. This makes you more vulnerable to the threat of double extensions, as Windows hides the true nature of the file attachment. To cure this, go to 'Folder Options' on your Control Panel, select 'View' and untick the box that says 'Hide file extensions for known file types'. Then click on 'OK' to finish.

Overlook Outlook

Because both programs are so widely used, today's email viruses take advantage of Microsoft Outlook and Outlook Express to spread rapidly. Therefore, one way to avoid falling foul of these nasties is to use an alternative email program. This is by no means foolproof, but using a product such as Pegasus Mail (**www.pmail.com**) or Opera's M2 (**www.opera.com**) will certainly reduce the risk of infection.

In the past, some viruses have exploited security weaknesses in Outlook and Outlook Express. This has resulted in attachments automatically being opened when messages have been viewed or even previewed. Microsoft actually issued a patch to fix the problem many months before these viruses struck, but most people hadn't bothered to download it. The message here is to make sure you keep your software bang up to date and download updates whenever available. You can find patches and fixes for all Microsoft products at **www.microsoft.com/technet**. Extra protection may be added by going to 'Tools', 'Options' and 'Security' in your copy of Outlook or Outlook Express. Then click on 'Do not allow attachments to be saved or opened that could potentially be a virus'.

"Treat every email with suspicion – especially those bearing attachments"



You can find patches and fixes for all Microsoft products at its TechNet site

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Microsoft CERTIFIED Partner

Host Europe

Step 1: Select Operating System

Cobalt RaQ

from £74.99 per month
The original "Web-in-a-box" solution.

RedHat Linux

from £99.99 per month
RedHat Linux is the industry standard for web hosting.

Microsoft Windows

from £199.99 per month
Microsoft Windows, the choice of small and large businesses alike.

Sun Solaris

from £199.99 per month
The market leader for reliability and performance.

Co-location

from £99.99 per month
Your server's safe in our Data Centre.

Step 2: Select Specification

RaQ 128
128 MB/20GB/**5 GB** Data Transfer

RaQ 256
256 MB/20.4GB/**20 GB** Data Transfer

RaQ 512
512 MB/30GB/**30 GB** Data Transfer

RaQ 550 256
256MB/40GB/**20 GB** Data Transfer

RaQ 550 512
512MB/2x80GB/**30 GB** Data Transfer

Entry
Intel Celeron 1Ghz/128MB/40GB/
10 GB Data Transfer

Professional
PIII 1.13Ghz/256MB/60GB/
20 GB Data Transfer

Ultra
PIII 1.266Ghz/512MB/80GB/
30 GB Data Transfer

Ultra II
2xPIII 1.4Ghz/512MB/2x18GB SCSI Hard Disks running RAID 1/
35 GB Data Transfer

Enterprise
2xAMD Athlon 2Ghz/1GB/4x36GB SCSI Hard Disks (RAID 5)/**55 GB** Data Transfer

Enterprise Xeon
2xIntel® Xeon® 2 Ghz/2GB/4x72GB SCSI Hard Disks (RAID5)/**80 GB** Data Transfer

Advance
2xUltra Web Servers/Ultra II Database & Ultra II Mail Server/**100 GB** Data Transfer

Corporate
3xUltra II Web Servers/Ultra Mail Server/ Enterprise Database Server/
250 GB Data Transfer

Corporate Advanced
4xEnterprise Web Servers/Xeon Database Server/Enterprise Mail Server/
400 GB Data Transfer

Sun Fire V100 128
500MHZ/128MB/40GB EIDE/
20 GB Data Transfer

Sun Fire V100 1GB
500MHZ/1GB/2x40GB EIDE/
30 GB Data Transfer

Sun Fire V120 1GB
650MHZ/1GB/36GB Ultra SCSI/
40 GB Data Transfer

Sun Enterprise
2x450MHZ/2GB/2x18GB Ultra SCSI/
100 GB Data Transfer

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Co-location Pro
Half rack of 20 U's of 19" rack server space/15 100 Mb Switch Ports /15 power sockets/up to 30 IP addresses/
45 GB Data Transfer

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Full rack of 40 U's of 19" rack server space/23 100 Mb Switch Ports /23 power sockets/up to 60 IP addresses/
70 GB Data Transfer

Step 3: Select Security

Firewall
only £100 per month

Protect your machine from unwanted visitors. Web based control panel allows you to add rules and deny undesirable visitors.

Backup
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Weekly - only £60 per month

Running databases, holding customer information or involved in e-commerce? If your answer is "yes" then order backup now and benefit from free restores if required!

Advanced Systems Monitoring
only £30 per month

The ultimate tool for knowing how your server is operating. Pre-empt critical failure and minimise server downtime with messaging via e-mail or SMS.

Plus Package
only £199.99 per month
(Save £600 per year)

Firewall, Daily Backup and Advanced Systems Monitoring bundled to save over £600 per year! The complete solution to your Web hosting security.

Product Focus: Ensim

FREE!

Free Ensim software pre-installed and ready to run on every Linux and Windows server!

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ensim

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Dedicated Servers are committed to providing you with the highest levels of customer service. Covering all aspects of the customer relationship, it's your assurance of world class service.

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Standard SLA:
Our Industry leading SLA is your guarantee of a totally reliable service. We'll pay you if it's not! Benefit from 99.9% connectivity, 30 minute reboot guarantee, 1:1 contention ratio on bandwidth and a price freeze-forever!

Advanced SLA:
Specially tailored for Enterprise level services and above, the Advanced SLA is perfect for mission critical sites. Backed by a money back guarantee, benefit from 99.999% connectivity, two hour hardware resolution, 30 minute reboot guarantee, 1:1 content on ratio on bandwidth, a price freeze and a personal Account Manager.

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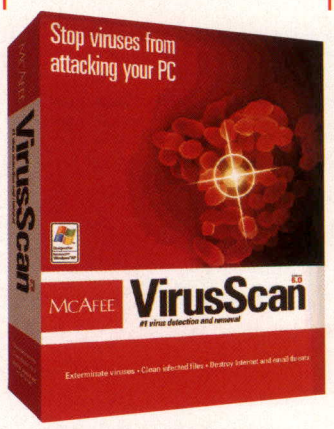
The software-based approach

To pay or not to pay?

PRODUCT	SYMANTEC NORTON ANTIVIRUS 2003
Price	£39.99
Email scanning	Yes
Healing of infected files	Yes
Quarantine facility	Yes
Automatic updates	Yes
Cost of updates	Free for 12 months, then £10.50 per year
Free technical support	Yes (online)

PRODUCT:	AVG ANTIVIRUS 6.0 FREE EDITION
Price	Free
Email scanning	Yes
Healing of infected files	Yes
Quarantine facility	Yes
Automatic updates	Yes
Cost of updates	Free
Free technical support	No



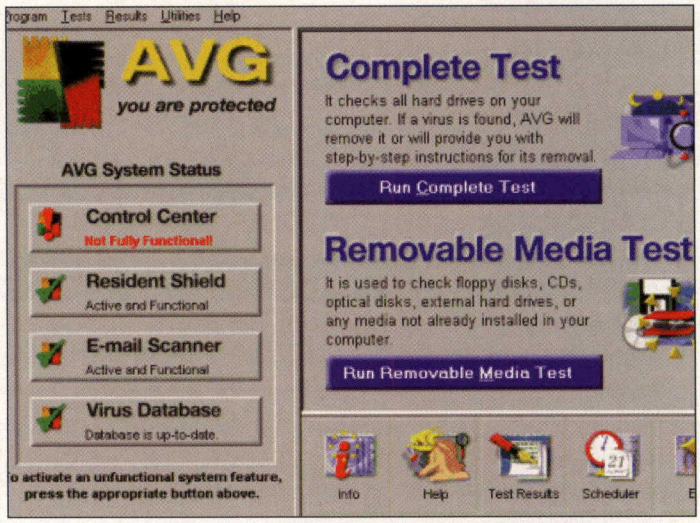
McAfee's VirusScan offers an alternative to the traditional anti-virus product

Worst viruses of all time

1. LoveLetter
2. Klez
3. Melissa
4. Sircam
5. Badtrans
6. Chernobyl
7. Nimda
8. SQL Slammer
9. Code Red
10. Anna Kournikova

When it comes to choosing a piece of anti-virus software, there's plenty to ponder. Options range from off-the-shelf packages, to online subscription services, to free downloads. We'll examine each type shortly, but first it's worth taking a quick look at exactly how anti-virus systems work.

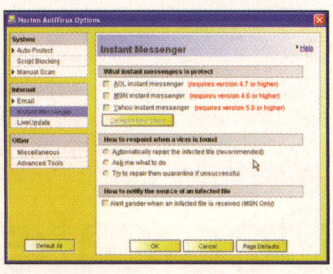
Traditionally, anti-virus software snares malicious programs and scripts by identifying a unique pattern of code that's been used to create them. Anti-virus software incorporates a large database of these patterns, representing viruses that have been previously identified by anti-virus researchers. When a new virus is discovered, the researchers dissect it and identify its unique pattern. An update can then be issued, which gives customers protection against the malicious code in the future. At one time computer users had to remember to manually update their software, but these days it tends to happen automatically.


Program Tests Results Utilities Help
AVG
you are protected
AVG System Status
Control Center
Not Fully Functional!
Resident Shield
Active and Functional
E-mail Scanner
Active and Functional
Virus Database
Database is up-to-date.
o activate an unfunctional system feature, press the appropriate button above.
Complete Test
It checks all hard drives on your computer. If a virus is found, AVG will remove it or will provide you with step-by-step instructions for its removal.
Run Complete Test
Removable Media Test
It is used to check floppy disks, CDs, optical disks, external hard drives, or any media not already installed in your computer.
Run Removable Media Test
Info
Help
Test Results
Scheduler

AVG Anti-Virus is available in a free version and boasts thousands of satisfied users

> **"Anti-virus software works by identifying a unique pattern of code"**

In a bid to catch brand new viruses, the patterns of which have yet to be identified, software developers have also begun employing heuristic scanning, which looks for unusual virus-like activity on your computer. If anything funny is spotted the software will alert the user, and the file(s) in question can be quarantined and sent to the anti-virus company for further analysis. If the file turns out to be a virus, an update will be issued to protect other users against infection.



Norton Antivirus from Symantec is one of the most popular anti-virus packages

Choosing a solution

If you choose an off-the-shelf anti-virus product from one of the major players such as Symantec (makers of Norton Antivirus), Network Associates (producers of McAfee VirusScan) or Trend Micro (responsible for PC-cillin), you're going to get a pretty similar product, although some vendors offer extra security features like a built-in firewall.

An alternative spin on the traditional anti-virus package is offered by Network Associates, via its McAfee VirusScan Online product. Instead of buying a cardboard box with a CD inside it, you pay for an annual subscription. This way, you avoid the hassle of having to upgrade when new and improved software is developed, as you're always using the latest version.

Free protection

It generally follows that the bigger and more established the software vendor, the better its anti-virus products will be. After all, a large outfit with deep pockets and a good reputation is likely to attract the best anti-virus researchers and programmers. But what about the free products available, such as AVG Anti-Virus Free Edition (**www.grisoft.com**)? Do these no-cost programs actually work and how useful are they?

Well, in the case of AVG Antivirus, the product has thousands of extremely satisfied users who claim it works better than paid-for packages they've used. On the downside, there's no technical support available if you encounter problems, while the automatic update function doesn't always work properly. It's also worth pondering the argument that a company offering a free product may not have the resources to issue virus updates as quickly as other software vendors.

But all things considered, if you press the Manual Update button on a regular basis and take a responsible attitude towards dealing with email, you should find that a product such as AVG Antivirus Free Edition gives you excellent protection against all types of malicious, data-wrecking code. ■

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- All requests for your site load balanced, ensuring maximum availability
- Ideal for business critical websites
- 100% uptime guaranteed

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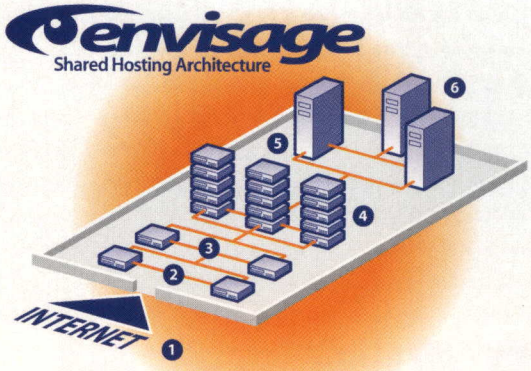

1. **Network Firewall** - Protects our network
2. **Internal Firewall** - Second protective shield
3. **Load Balancers** - Efficiently distributes traffic across server clusters
4. **Redundant Web Servers** - Ensures delivery of site contents if one server fails
5. **Network Storage** - Independent storage optimising server performance
6. **Disk Backup** - Routine backup storage to prevent data loss

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David Watham
Watham Communications

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Business account at a glance

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Manage your money online

WHO SAID PERSONAL FINANCE HAS TO BE A DRAG? JAMES THORNTON EXPLAINS HOW TO TAKE THE PAIN OUT OF MAKING ENDS MEET USING THE WEB

When Mick Hucknall moaned that "Money's too tight to mention" in the Simply Red song of the same name, he made two fundamental errors. Firstly, he contradicted himself by proceeding to rabbit on about having no cash for over three minutes. Secondly, and more importantly, he failed to realise that by not facing up to his financial headaches he was only making things worse for himself.

I suppose we can all see a bit of ourselves in poor old Mick (only a bit mind you) when we get into a fiscal pickle, as we bury our problems in the back of our minds, hoping they'll resolve themselves automatically. Of course they never do, and will only escalate into a tangled web of debts, deficits and IOUs.

Whether it's due to an overt fear of stepping within spitting distance of the bank manager, or simply that we find it difficult to keep track of the incomings and outgoings of our accounts, the traditional banking system has never really been an easy way of managing our cash. Until recently we've just gone along with it, putting up with low rates of interest, long queues and limited opening hours, because that was the only way. Things are changing however, and the Web is opening up a revolutionary new way of whipping your finances into shape with the minimum of aggro.

Not only do online banks offer a means of shifting your money around 24/7 and the chance to avoid any uncomfortable run-ins with the bank

manager, the rates are far more competitive than you'll find anywhere on the high street. What's more, there are plenty of places online where you can pick up deals on investment schemes, loans and mortgages without paying over the odds.

We show you how you can sniff out the best deals and start making the most of the money you've got, rather than worrying about shortfalls in your finances.

Online bank accounts

Since it first came along in the mid-Nineties, online banking has revolutionised the way we stash our cash. In fact, it has become such a phenomenon that 6.5 million Brits have now waved goodbye to their bank manager, opting to bank online instead. It seems that people are becoming increasingly frustrated with the problems of high street banking, and in the last year alone, one million customers have succumbed to convenience and switched their finances to the Web.

Show some interest

The interest rates offered by online current accounts are considerably more competitive than those you'll find in traditional bank accounts. Net banks are able to offer these better rates due to the fact that they don't have to pay high overheads, and consequently embarrass the big high street establishments who pay as little as a miserly 0.1 percent a year. In fact, financial analyst Moneyfacts (**www.moneyfacts.co.uk**) says that four of the five best paying current accounts come from banks that operate predominantly online. Cahoot (**www.cahoot.co.uk**), the online arm of Abbey National, tops the chart, paying a whopping 3.3 percent gross, while Smile (**www.smile.co.uk**) offers 3 percent on current account balances.

It's also worth checking out the special incentives and deals offered by online banks, as they compete vigorously to win your business. For instance, First Direct (**www.firstdirect.com**) furnishes you with £25 when you open an account online, plus an automatic £500 overdraft at just 9.9 percent EAR.

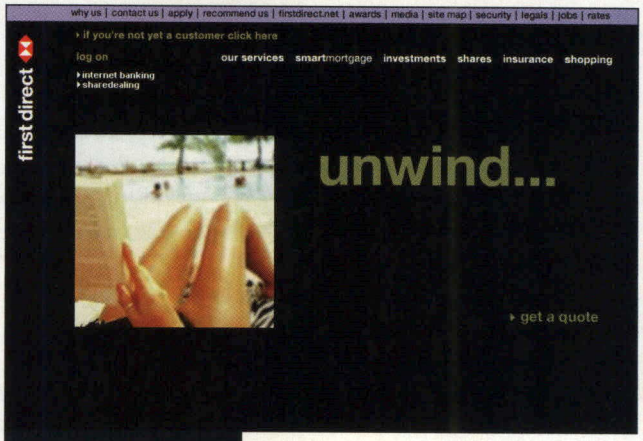
> "It's worth checking out the special incentives and deals offered by online banks, as they compete vigorously to win your business"

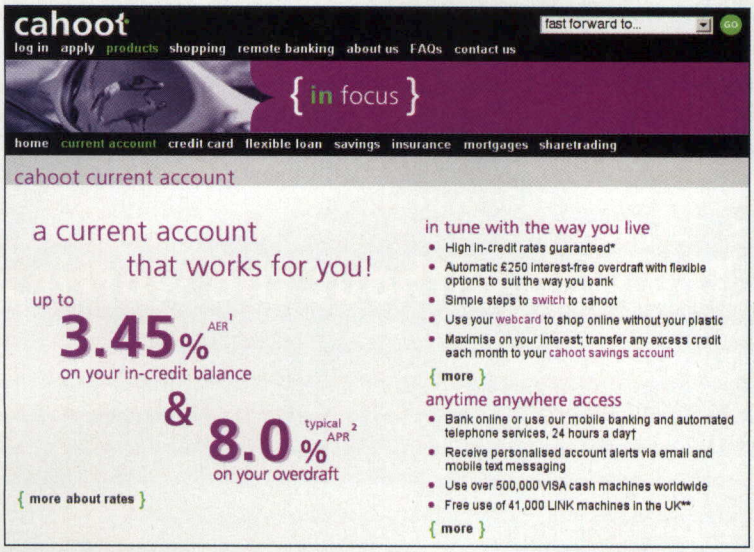
Kings of convenience

If you haven't been tempted by the high rates of interest, overdrafts and incentives served up by Internet banks, you'll definitely be won over by the convenience they offer. As the pyjama-clad Robbie Coltrane was so keen to tell us in the Barclays ad, the key advantage of switching your banking to the Web is that you get access to your finances at any time of day or night from wherever you are. And, as well as getting a cash card that you can use in any LINK machine, you can also create standing orders, switch money between accounts and set up direct debits within a couple of mouse clicks.

Many online banks are taking advantage of the latest technology to get one over on their high street rivals, introducing a number of initiatives designed to make it easier to manage your finances. Egg (**www.egg.com**), for example, recently launched the first service by a British bank that enables customers to email money securely to friends and family – known as Egg Pay.

Meanwhile, First Direct has pioneered SMS banking, sending customers weekly statements via text message, which is great for keeping track of exactly how much you've got to play around with in the coming week. The bank has also developed a 'virtual assistant', a computer-generated avatar called 'Cara' who guides you through the financial minefield with a smile and a wink, making up for the lack of a physical face that haunts online banks. And if you're the kind of person who likes the personal touch, then fear not, as most online banks now offer telephone support services where you can chinwag with live operators about the state of your finances.

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Have you got Cahoot? If you have, then you're getting one of the best current account rates around

CASE STUDY: I made the switch

PRACTICAL INTERNET'S VERY OWN DESIGN GURU **NICKY BARTLETT** EXPLAINS HOW SHE SORTED OUT HER FINANCES BY SWITCHING TO INTERNET BANKING

"I decided to switch to First Direct back in 1998, mainly because their telephone and Internet banking style appealed to me greatly. It meant no more fussy over-the-counter stress at lunchtime, moody cashiers or queues.

I really like the way you can always see what's going on in your account from any computer – I've even checked my balance before in Tunisia in the Hotel Internet café.

I have since opened up a savings account as well as my current account, and have sorted myself out with a Visa card and a personal loan from First Direct too. They have a very friendly manner whenever you speak to them on the phone and are always extremely helpful. I also have my House Contents insurance with them, which for less than £5 a month gives me peace of mind.

I'd never go back to my old bank, as it was hard work in comparison to Net banking. They were really pushy with letters and bombarded me with junk mail constantly. First Direct is much more accessible than any other bank or building society I've been with, and the cards and stationery are pretty swish too!"

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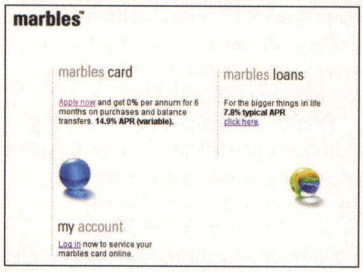
Manage your money online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Marbles offers one of the best plastic rates online

Credit cards

Taking out a current or savings account online is all well and good, but sometimes you get to the stage where your regular income just isn't enough, and you have to look to a flexible acquaintance to tide you over for a while. Again, the Web can come to your rescue here, helping to match you with a credit card to suit you.

Most of the major online-only banks offer great rates on credit cards, most notably Egg, whose Egg card offers 0 percent on balance transfers until January 2004, and an impressive 0 percent interest on purchases until November this year, with a variable APR of 12.6 percent. You also get 0.5 percent cashback on purchases. Marbles (**www.marbles.com**) also offers zero interest on purchases and balance transfers for six months, with a variable rate of 14.9 percent APR after this. If it's a longer-term solution you're after, you may wish to plump for the fantastic plastics offered by Cahoot (8 percent APR) or Intelligent Finance (**www.if.com**) which comes with an impressive 8.9 percent APR.

For a comprehensive rundown of the best deals out there, check out **www.1st4creditcards.co.uk.**

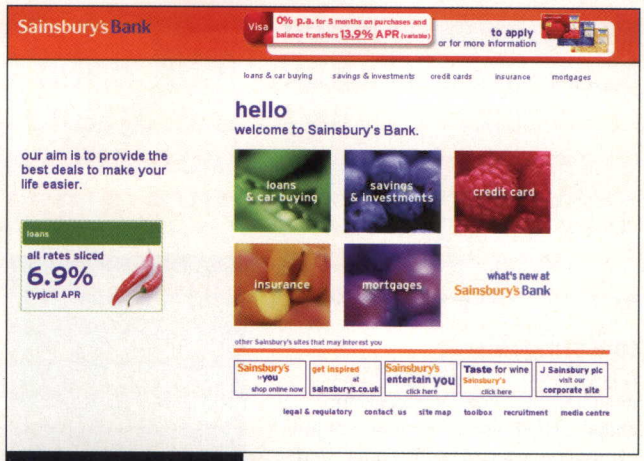
Mortgages

As a result of the house price boom, banks and building societies have been rubbing their hands in glee as they line their pockets tying customers into lengthy mortgage deals. Luckily, this means competition is intense, with the various institutions vying to offer the cheapest rates. Of course, the Net is the best place to start hunting for a good deal on a mortgage, and directory sites such as Mortgages UK Online (**www.mortgages-uk-online.co.uk**) and the similarly titled UK Mortgages Online (**www.ukmortgagesonline.com**) provide a good comparison of what's out there.

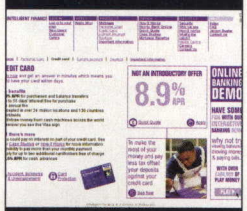
The Money Supermarket (**www.moneysupermarket.com**) is an excellent way of tracking down the right deal for you. Simply enter the details of your personal circumstances online and a mortgage advisor will trawl through the 7,000 or so mortgages on the market, so you don't have to. The advisor will then call you back and discuss your options with you, or you can even arrange for a personal visit.

Personal loans

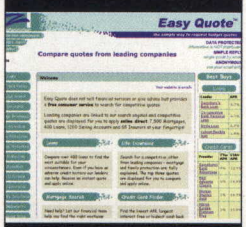
If you feel like cheering yourself up with a holiday, a new car or a couple of gallons of strawberry milkshake, chances are you'll need to borrow a bit of cash to finance the deal. If you've got a Net connection this becomes even easier, thanks to the excellent rates of interest offered by online banks.



Get a loan from Sainsbury's then blow the lot on grapes



If you're in doubt about where to get credit, try IF.com



EasyQuote offers you the chance to compare banks

It pays to hold an existing current account with the bank too, as they often offer better rates for customers. Smile, for example, offers a special 8.9 percent APR for current account customers, and provides applicants with an answer via email after they've completed the online application form. Cahoot offers flexible loans at an interest rate of a staggering 6.8 percent regardless of the amount you borrow, between £1,000 and £15,000.

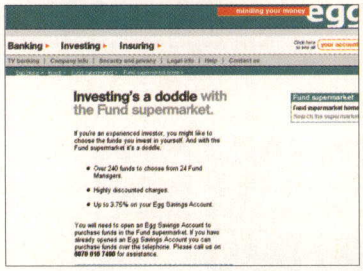
Provided you own your home, there are plenty of decent rates on loans to be snapped up online, and one of the cheapest is available from Sainsbury's (**www.sainsburysbank.co.uk**), which offers homeowner loans at rates from only 6.7 percent. If you're looking around for the best deal, probably your best bet is to try a loan comparison site such as Online Loans (**www.onlineloans.co.uk**) or Easy Quote (**www.easy-quote.co.uk**).

SIX OF THE BEST – ONLINE BANKS COMPARED

Bank	Current account gross rate	Overdraft	Telephone banking	ATM card/cheque book	Credit card rate	Interest on £1,500 loan
Cahoot (www.cahoot.co.uk)	3.3%	Interest free up to £250	Yes	Both	8.0% typical APR (up to six weeks interest free)	6.8% typical APR
Citibank (www.citibank.co.uk)	0.1%	Interest free up to £1,000	Yes	Both	13.9% typical APR 13.9% typical APR (0% APR for six months on balance transfers and purchases)	N/A
Smile (www.smile.co.uk)	3.0%	Interest free up to £260	Yes	Both	9.9% APR for Smile customers, 10.5% otherwise	6.8% APR
First Direct (www.firstdirect.com)	1.98%	Automatic £500 at 9.9% EAR	Yes	Both	14.9% APR standard variable rate	9.9% typical APR
Intelligent Finance (www.if.com)	2.96%	8.39% EAR	Yes	Both	8.9% APR (up to 56 days interest free for purchases)	15.9% APR (fixed)
Egg (www.egg.com)	No current account	N/A	N/A	N/A	12.6% APR (variable, with 0% on balance transfers until Jan 2004 and 0% on purchases until Nov 2003)	10.9% APR

All rates are correct at time of going to press and are subject to variation.

Manage your money online



Egg's Fund Supermarket helps you cash go further

Investing wisely

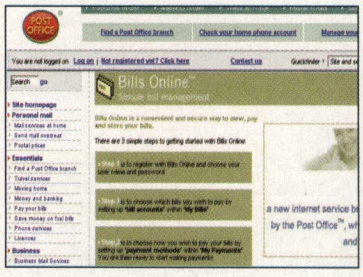
Anyone who's ever listened to the heartstring-tugging TV appeals for national telethons will be aware of the expression 'every penny counts', and it's true that setting aside a bit (or even a lot) once in a while will pay dividends further down the track. Choosing where to invest your cash is never easy, but at least you can turn to the Web for help.

The big online banks all offer a rich medley of ISAs, PEPs and online sharedealing services. Egg even allows you to build your own ISA by choosing from a range of discounted funds at the site's Fund Supermarket, although inexperienced investors are probably best off sticking to the pre-packaged ISAs, which are made up of four hand-picked funds selected by Egg using FT Fund Ratings.

If you're looking for an independent, unbiased comparison of the various savings and investment schemes out there, try **www.financesearch.co.uk** or **www.savingsaccounts.co.uk**.

Settle your bills online

Isn't it funny how some items of mail stand out more than others? A paycheck or a birthday card for example, are normally pretty easy to spot on the doormat. But for some reason utility bills become strangely invisible as soon as they plonk through the letterbox, and can go unnoticed for weeks on end



Paying bills on the Web is fun. Honestly...

> **"By taking care of your bills online you can avoid the arcane game of financial hide-and-seek that occurs once a quarter"**

SHOW ME THE MONEY

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www.fool.com
Arguably the most entertaining finance-related read on the Web, the Fool dishes up a mouth-watering selection of straight-talking features which cover topics ranging from college savings to pensions.

FINANCIAL TIMES
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It's big, it's pink and it puts a smile on the faces of bankers all over the country. With a wealth of markets data and tools at your disposal, FT.com is just as insightful as the paper itself and is the ideal destination for anyone looking to play the markets to their advantage.

BLOOMBERG
www.bloomberg.co.uk
This site, from the Financial News channel, is crammed with information on the latest developments in the money world. The Charts and Analysis section is useful for investors, as it allows you to track the progress of your stocks and shares.

THIS IS MONEY
www.thisismoney.com
A huge site offering practical advice on all aspects of managing your cash. This is Money contains a number of useful online tools such as interactive calculators that help you figure out savings rates, mortgage repayments and exchange rates.

until a big red one turns up, at which point you finally spot the request for money.

By taking care of your bills online you can avoid this arcane game of financial hide-and-seek that occurs once a quarter. The two main services are Girobank's BillPay (**www.billpayment.co.uk**) and the Bills Online facility from the Post Office (**www.billsonline.com**). The Girobank service allows you to register to settle your bills by debit card regularly or on a one-off basis, and is pretty straightforward to set up. The Post Office facility provides you with the ability to choose which utilities you want to pay online. The site will then notify you via email when your next bill is available. You can check this online before clicking a button to pay in the method of your choice.

Making payments securely

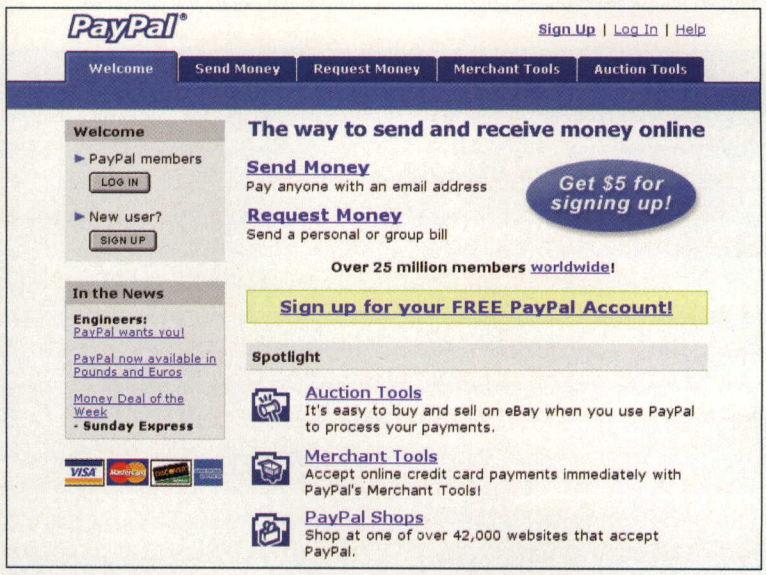
While the Internet is great for helping you manage your money more effectively, it's still seen by many as a breeding ground for dodgy deals, fraudsters and rip-off merchants. Although these scams are not quite as prevalent as some sections of the press will have you believe, it's still worth being cautious when parting with money over the Net.

One of the best ways of ensuring you don't get diddled is to make use of services such as Worldpay (**www.worldpay.com**), PayPal (**www.paypal.com**) and Billpoint (**www.billpoint.com**), which allow you to make transactions securely.

Lose your inhibitions

Security concerns have always been one of the major reasons why people have shied away from online banking, and given the scare stories that were doing the rounds in the early stages of the technology, this is pretty understandable. However, these initial flaws are a world away from the state of online banking today, which is beginning to become an institution in its own right. All the major Internet banks now employ layer upon layer of encryption and security techniques to ensure that you're the only person who can touch your money. After all, the banks would be the hardest hit if there was a security breach, as people would soon desert them if they lost faith in the system.

There really is no reason to be afraid of online banking any more. In fact, it's highly likely to ease your financial stresses and let you focus on more important things. Like how you're going to spend your money...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Request Money
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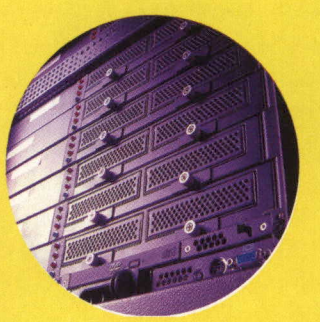

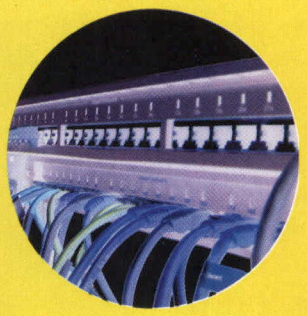

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Looking out for love

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Looking out for love

NICK SWEENEY TAKES YOU ON A TOUR OF ONLINE DATING AND SHOWS HOW TO FIND YOUR PERFECT PARTNER ON THE NET

'LOVE IS ALL YOU NEED', said the Beatles. But it's not always an easy thing to come by. More young Britons than ever are living the single life, whether by choice or not, and the pressures of time and work don't make it any easier to meet your match. Not everyone can marry their college sweetheart or find that special someone working on the other side of the office. And if we're honest, the chances of meeting Mr or Ms Right on a night out in the city centre are about the same as getting the winning numbers on the Lotto!

Thank heavens, then, for the Net. More and more people are finding their perfect partners with the aid of the Web, and in doing so, they're helping to break the stereotypical view of personal ads and dating agencies. The days of the 'Dateline couple' adorning the back page of the Radio Times are long gone. It's not just the example of shows such as *Sex and the City* that has led Brits to emulate their transatlantic cousins and embrace 'date culture' in all its variations. Taking an online relationship into real life has helped bring old-style courting back into fashion. And while some dating trends seem to be designed for Sunday supplement feature-writers rather than building lasting relationships (think of 'speed dating', or 'dating-in-the-dark') online dating in all its forms has gone well beyond being a nine-day wonder. It's become a great example of how the Web has matured in recent years. In short, it shows how going online is no longer just a geeky pastime; it's become a way for people with no great interest in technology to enhance their lives – and what better way than by finding a partner? Whether you're intrigued or sceptical at the thought of trading the Friday night meat-market for the click of a mouse, we'll show you how online dating is changing the way people hook up. And for once, we're not talking about modems!

Building relationships

If there's one thing we like to emphasise at *Practical Internet*, it's that the most important thing about the online world isn't the hardware, the software or even the speed of your broadband connection, but the way it brings people together. In that respect, the Net has been a place to build relationships right from its earliest days. Whenever networked technology has brought together strangers, whether through newsgroups, IRC or multi-user environments such as LambdaMOO, it's been a fertile ground for those wanting to give up the single life. In that regard, the massive growth of the Web throughout the mid-Nineties simply expanded the capacity of the medium to embrace those going online for the first time.

> "More and more people are finding their perfect partners with the romantic aid of the World Wide Web"

As you might expect, it was the Americans, with their well-established culture of semi-formal dating, who first bought into the idea of using the Web to seek out prospective partners through sites such as Match.com. But the idea quickly spread, adding a technological sheen to the once-derided world of personals and matchmaking. Nowadays, most major ISPs in the UK offer some kind of dating facility, either through an in-house service or an affiliate, such as NTLworld's link-up with TheDateMate.com. What's significant isn't just the fact that thousands of people use Net-based dating on a regular basis – it's that they're telling their friends and colleagues as well. →

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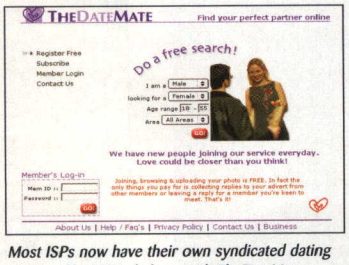
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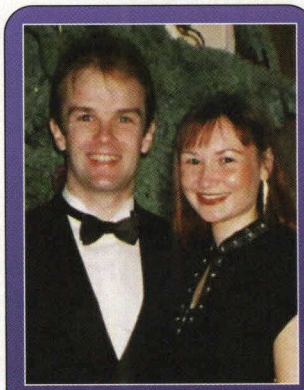
Most ISPs now have their own syndicated dating service, like NTL's link-up with TheDateMate

You have a good chance of finding love online, but think carefully about the information you give out



Love match

Joanne Feaviour and Andrew Shakespeare are testament to the success of online dating. Three years ago they made contact through DatingDirect.com. They've been living together since November 2002 and plan to get married next summer. Andrew learned about the site though his work in IT; Joanne signed up 'for a laugh' after seeing an ad on her ISP's home page. She'd used newspaper personal columns before, but without success, and hoped Web-based dating might offer something different.

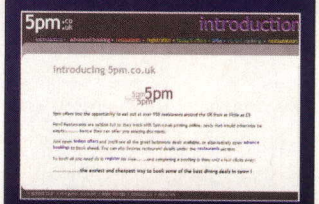
Both Joanne and Andrew had gone on dates with other members which didn't work out, but neither gave up on the site and they eventually contacted each other through DatingDirect's messaging service. Their relationship spread to email and the phone, until after two months they finally arranged to meet at Sheffield's Meadowhall Centre. Both had pre-date jitters: Andrew considered cancelling, while Joanne worried that her date would walk right past her. Instead, when Joanne's brother called at 8pm to check on her, she told him not to worry – everything was going just fine!

The strength of their relationship has led friends to sign up to online dating services, and they urge people to shed their scepticism and give the Net a try. "Although we were geographically close," says Andrew, "I was travelling to work in Leeds at the same time as Joanne was travelling out of the city. It's unlikely we'd have met!"

Looking out for love

Wine me, dine me...

So, you've banished the first-meeting nerves and your online relationship looks like blooming into an offline romance. Don't unplug that modem cable just yet! The Web doesn't only bring singles together: more often than not, it provides an easier way to enjoy the nicer things about dating. If you're looking to book a table at a restaurant, **www.5pm.co.uk** provides both last-minute availability details as well as advance reservations for the swankier eateries. Speaking of last-minute, the ubiquitous **Lastminute.com** offers great deals on flights, hotels, short breaks and 'wicked weekends'. Alternatively, low-cost airlines such as Ryanair (**www.ryanair.com**) and EasyJet (**www.easyjet.com**) provide guaranteed savings for online bookings. Looking for flowers? Try Flowergram at **www.flowergram.co.uk**. Flowers and chocolates? Thorntons offers online ordering at **www.thorntons.co.uk**. Something a little less perishable? How about diamond jewellery, courtesy of IceCool (**www.icecool.co.uk**). Do the sums: Flowers: £30. Dinner and a movie: £60. Two tickets to Barcelona, for a surprise: £120. Going online to save money on all these, without your object of desire knowing: Priceless.



5pm.co.uk
www.5pm.co.uk
Whether it's a last-minute lunch date or a long-planned night at a swanky restaurant, www.5pm.co.uk aims to sort you out.

Lastminute.com
www.lastminute.com
Lastminute.com's 'wicked weekends' provide complete romantic packages, leaving you free to concentrate on your significant other.

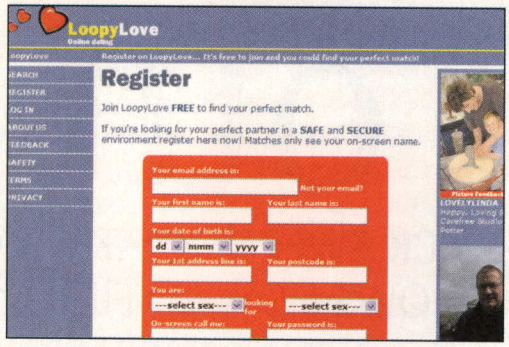
In many respects, online dating is not that different from meeting people in 'real life'. You can take the formal, organised route of being matched up by a Web-based agency or putting your details online in a personals ad; alternatively, it's perfectly reasonable to hang out in the online places you normally inhabit, because there's every chance of meeting someone with similar interests. There's no reason why you won't meet the love of your life through a West Bromwich Albion mailing list, as opposed to a glossy, subscription-based matchmaking site. That said, the specialist dating sites are undoubtedly better for those actively seeking a relationship, or simply wishing to expand their social circles.

No matter which route you take, building a relationship over the Net is often the exact opposite of the heavily-hyped 'speed dating' phenomenon. It allows you to cut through the nervous smalltalk and bypass often-deceptive first impressions, so that you can concentrate on mutual interests from the first conversation, and take things further at your own pace. This makes it ideal for those who don't have much time on their hands, and may be burdened with the pressures of work, children or other commitments. It means that for many people, by the time they reach the first real life, face-to-face meeting, the ice has already been broken, allowing them to resume the online conversation at the point it was left off. It's this ability to put aside the pretence and temper the nerve-racking prospect of blind dates with strangers, which makes online dating an increasingly attractive prospect.

The culture of online dating

If you enter 'UK dating' into a search engine, you could easily be daunted by the array of sites claiming to offer the best route to relationship bliss. This raises the question: which one do you choose? While there's no 'Google of dating agencies', there's undoubtedly a hierarchy based upon reputation and word-of-mouth recommendations. This doesn't mean you ought to sign up to the biggest and most prominent sites without checking them out first. But it does mean that if you've been told a site is good, the chances are that other like-minded people have heard the same.

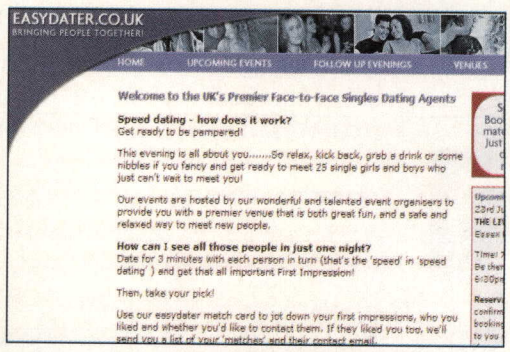
The closest online equivalent of traditional matchmaking services are those which are based on formal offline events, including speed-dating


LoopyLove
Online dating
Register
Join LoopyLove FREE to find your perfect match.
If you're looking for your perfect partner in a SAFE and SECURE environment register here now! Matches only see your on-screen name.

You don't have to be loopy to register at LoopyLove – but it helps. Well, on second thoughts, maybe not...

agencies such as UKSpeedDating (**www.ukspeeddating.com**) and **www.speeddater.co.uk**, which allow you to book a place at particular gatherings. In truth, these sites don't really count as 'online dating', since they still rely on face-to-face meetings, with all of their pros and cons, rather than taking advantage of the different dynamics of communicating through email, instant messaging or online chat. Still, they're a useful service if you're not so confident about your ability to stun people with your typing skills, or if you simply enjoy the atmosphere of the group gatherings arranged by the owners of these sites.

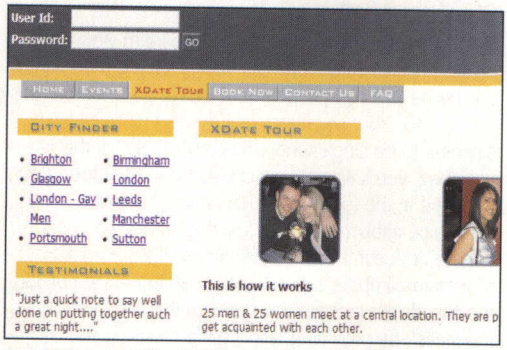
Looking beyond these sites, there's still a wide selection which emphasise the online aspect of building a relationship, ranging from simple 'personal ads'-style message boards to subscription-based dating communities such as UDate (**www.udate.com**) and WooWho (**www.woowho.co.uk**). Of these sites, **DatingDirect.com** is undoubtedly the British market leader, with a database of over 850,000 paying members. CEO Darren Richards started the site in 1999 when he was looking for a partner, and decided to try something different from existing services: "I looked at the main American dating sites, and thought they were a good example of what not to do." Instead, Darren decided on a 'no gimmicks' approach, getting users to register with their real first names rather than nicknames, and forgoing chat rooms for an email-style private messaging system run through the site. The aim was to encourage serious, safe communication


EASYDATER.CO.UK
BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER!
HOME
UPCOMING EVENTS
FOLLOW UP EVENINGS
VENUES
Welcome to the UK's Premier Face-to-Face Singles Dating Agents
Speed dating - how does it work?
Get ready to be pampered!
How can I see all those people in just one night?

EasyDater is another 'speed dating' site – a useful service if you enjoy the atmosphere of group gatherings, but do they lead to lasting relationships?

The Internet date from hell

Psychology student Carey Anderson was tired of how the over-enthusiastic attentions of a particularly nerdy classmate prevented her from meeting other men in college. After trying the usual bars and nightclubs without much success, she decided to register a profile at Match.com and see if there were any likely lads in her area. After a few non-starters, she began an email conversation with someone who seemed to have lots of things in common with her. (Plus, he looked pretty good.) The first date arrived, and Carey was sitting in a restaurant, waiting for her companion. "So, in walks the nerdy boy from college, sees me, waves, and comes over. And I'm horrified, so I try to hurry him away, saying 'I have a date for tonight due any minute.' And he says, 'Yes, I know – I'm your date.' Turns out he'd basically been stalking me to find out what I liked, with his friend's photo in his profile. I ran screaming out of the restaurant, wondering just how easy it was to get a restraining order."

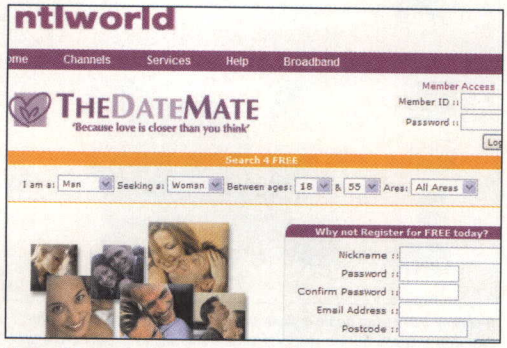


Speed dating agencies such as XDate concentrate on offline meetings, but allow you to book places at their events over the Web

"Having a good photo alongside your profile usually makes a difference"

and build a sense of community around the site, based upon feedback from users. Members' profiles are vetted by staff before they go online, and messages are actively moderated for abuse or spam. This approach seems to have paid off for the site, which gains over 80,000 new members each month, many from word-of-mouth recommendations. "More than enough," says Darren, "to replace those members who've signed off from the site simply because they've found their ideal match!"

DatingDirect reflects one successful approach to online dating, but some dating sites take a different slant. You can find sites such as GoDateMe (**www.godate.me.uk**), which styles itself as 'the politically incorrect dating site', and offers something closer in format to the classic nightclub 'ladies night'. Women can register and post profiles for free, while men have to fork out in order to reply. The advantage? A high female/male ratio, by contrast with most other dating sites, and an informal, cheeky atmosphere. The disadvantage? Like its real-world inspiration, the site feels like a place in which women are placed on display in order to persuade men to fork out their cash. You don't have to be Germaine Greer for this to raise an eyebrow.



TheDateMate.com's slogan, 'because love is closer than you think' has strong appeal and draws in many hopeful customers

In short, with so many UK-based dating sites to choose from, it comes down to a question of choosing the site whose character, user base and fee structure appeals to you most. There's a substantial list gathered at the UK Net Dating Guide (**www.ukdatingguide.co.uk**), arranged according to site specialisations. Almost all subscription-driven sites let you carry out cost-free searches before you join, allowing you to browse the profiles in the database and become familiar with the user interface before you sign up. Some even let you create a profile without charging. This means you have ample opportunity to test out a wide range of sites, not only to judge which ones have the right 'feel', but also, perhaps more importantly, to check which have the sort of person you most want to contact!

It's only when it's time to get in touch with the people who interest you that you'll be asked to whip out your wallet. Most sites offer either free or reduced-cost introductory periods, so you only need to commit yourself to a few months' membership at a cost of perhaps £20-30. (On average, annual subscriptions run to between £60 and £100.) It's best to pay a little extra for a slightly longer subscription period. You might be able to pay a fiver and sign up for a week, but most people find it takes a bit longer to get into the swing of things, and it may take a few dates before you've tweaked both your profile and your search criteria to find someone who suits you.

Make the most of your profile

A few tips won't go amiss when creating a profile and getting in touch with people for the first time. While online dating tends to negate the effect of 'first impressions', having a good photo alongside your profile usually makes a big difference, so put some effort into uploading an image that you wouldn't be ashamed to have sitting on your mantelpiece. When describing yourself and making initial contact with other members, it pays to be original, show a sense of humour and express your personality. Most of all, though, don't be tempted to over-embellish things: in spite of the clichés about role-play on the Net, honesty goes a long way. If you're a window cleaner pretending to be a brain surgeon, don't be surprised if, rather than attracting lots of interest, you're caught out by interested medical students asking technical questions!

The GoDateMe style of online dating has advantages and disadvantages, and it's a matter of personal taste whether this site will suit you

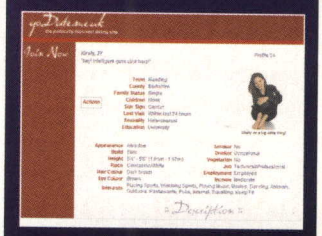
Top dating sites

DatingDirect
www.datingdirect.com
DatingDirect has the largest membership of any UK dating site, giving it an immediate edge. But the attention to detail in developing an online community, together with an ethos valuing well thought-out communication over gimmickry, makes it well worth a look, regardless.

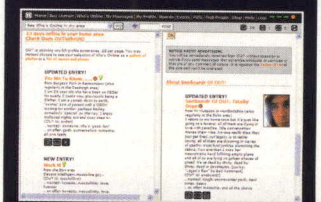
Welcome to DatingDirect.com
Start your search ...
I am a: Man
looking for: Woman
aged: 25 - 45
from: Select from list...
Search Now!
Help & Information | Become an Affiliate | Success Stories | Corporate Information

DatingAgency.com
www.datingagency.com
DatingAgency.com is another easy-to-use, well-designed site with a sizeable membership base. Register with it, and you get to post a profile, complete with photo, for free. You only need pay if and when you choose to contact other members.

goDate.Me.UK
www.godate.me.uk
Some people may find GoDateMe's 'ladies night' attitude more than a little politically incorrect, but the site appears proud of the label, and of its policy of allowing women in for free while charging the men to contact them. More of a meat-market than a meeting place perhaps, but the site is certainly less stuffy than some of its peers.



OUTintheUK
www.outintheuk.com
OUTInTheUK offers two distinct sites for men and women seeking same-sex relationships. The registration process limits the capacity for abuse, the site is beautifully put together, and the membership base is large enough to ensure that you don't feel alone in your area.



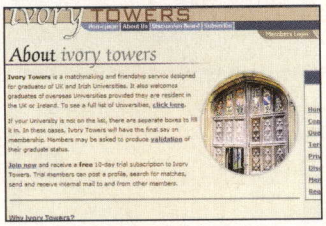
Looking out for love

Top ten dating safety tips

1. Don't put information on your profile that might identify you.
2. Use the dating service's own messaging until you're confident enough to 'take it to email'.
3. Once you're ready to share your phone number, give out a mobile number rather than a landline.
4. When arranging to meet, choose a public place at a time when other people will be around.
5. Arrive separately; don't arrange to be picked up from home or work.
6. Think 'informal': coffee rather than a night in a pub, a burger and chips rather than a three-course meal.
7. Make sure at least one person knows where you are going, and how long your date is meant to last.
8. Stay in the place that you arranged for your meeting. Don't 'go on elsewhere'.
9. Keep things short and sweet: arrange a time to leave, and stick to it.
10. Don't be embarrassed to leave if things go wrong.

***SindhiMatrimony.com** is one of a number of related sites designed to assist arranged marriages for South Asian communities around the world*

"Online dating carries fewer risks than a casual meeting in a bar, but there are still precautions to take, especially for women"



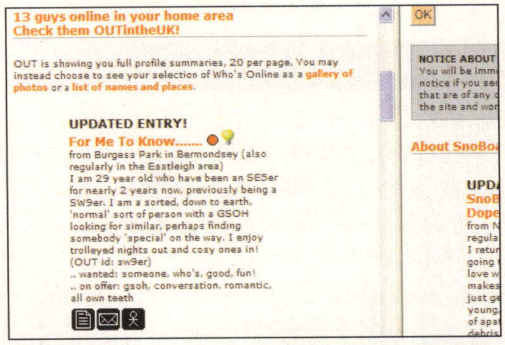
*Nostalgic for college? Wish you'd never left? Look for a tryst with a fellow alumnus or alumna with **IvoryTowers.net***

If the mainstream dating services aren't quite your thing, there are plenty of specialist alternatives. Some smack of traditional British elitism, such as Ivory Towers (**www.ivorytowers.net**), dedicated to college alumni, or Tatler-tastic 'bespoke introduction service' Berkeley-Sweetingham (**www.berkeley-sweetingham.com**), which will put you in touch with the Sebastian or Camilla of your choice for a modest £5,000. However, most specialist sites are designed to reflect and account for the particular concerns of the communities they serve.

Most dating sites cater for men seeking men, or women seeking women, but there are also many dedicated sites serving gay, lesbian and bisexual personals. In fact, sites such as Gay.com (**uk.gay.com**) were among the first to take advantage of the Net as a way of bringing people into contact with others who shared their sexuality, both for support and to initiate relationships. You'll now find a wide range of gay personals sites, including Symposia (**www.symposia.co.uk**) and the beautifully designed OUTInTheUK (**www.outintheuk.com**). The big advantage of these sites is that they're dedicated to same-sex relationships, allowing for a greater degree of confidence and candour than mainstream services, and providing much less opportunity for abuse.

Other minority groups shouldn't feel left out either. Most major religions have their own distinctive sites: Christian Connection offers cross-denominational friendship and matchmaking (**www.christianconnection.co.uk**); you can look for Jewish dates (**www.jdate.com**), sign up with the Muslim Marriage Uniting Bureau (**www.mmub.co.uk**) or seek a Hindu spouse at **www.hindu.fsnet.co.uk**. There are also a number of sites, such as **www.bharatmatrimony.com**, dedicated to arranging marriages within particular communities originating from South Asia.

Many other specialist sites challenge traditional stereotypes which might exclude members from more general dating sites. Handidate (**www.handidate.com**) finds partners for people with disabilities; Love Is Positive (**www.loveispositive.com**) helps bring together straight or gay people with HIV or AIDS; and single parents can sign up with Partners For Parents (**www.pforp.co.uk**).


13 guys online in your home area
Check them OUTintheUK!
OUT is showing you full profile summaries, 20 per page. You may instead choose to see your selection of Who's Online as a gallery of photos or a list of names and places.
UPDATED ENTRY!
For Me To Know.....
from Burgess Park in Bermondsey (also regularly in the Eastleigh area)
I am 29 year old who have been an SE5er for nearly 2 years now, previously being a SW9er. I am a sorted, down to earth, 'normal' sort of person with a GSOH looking for similar, perhaps finding somebody 'special' on the way. I enjoy trolleyed nights out and cosy ones in!
(OUT id: sw9er)
.. wanted: someone, who's, good, fun!
.. on offer: gsoh, conversation, romantic, all own teeth

Sites such as OUTInTheUK allow for a greater degree of confidence and candour than the mainstream services, as they're dedicated to same-sex relationships, providing much less opportunity for abuse

Single... on the sly?

DatingDirect's Darren Richards takes a dim view of online philanderers: "Lying in your profile is a breach of our terms and conditions – and luckily our member base is large, so other members usually alert us to people claiming to be single when they're not." Still, if this is your bag, you'll want to ensure you don't get found out.

Based in the foothills of Ben Nevis, Ace Alibi (**www.ace-alibi.com**) offers just the service you need – and no, it doesn't involve claiming you were on a mountain-climbing expedition! For an annual fee of £20, the site claims to 'help you through this moment of madness', by providing tailor-made excuses. You can order authentic-looking invitations and hotel reservations with accurate postmarks, and 'phone-staff' with regional accents will pretend to be your hotel receptionist. Frankly, while we're impressed with the claims of Ace Alibi, we suspect that in the long run it won't save you from the consequences of telling huge porkies…

Date safely, date smartly

Online dating carries fewer risks than a casual meeting in a bar, but there are still precautions to take, especially for women. First, don't put info in your profile that could identify you – stay in control of how much you reveal. When making contact, use communications tools provided by the site. Email can be harder to monitor, and makes identifying you easier. Consider setting up a pseudonymous account at a site like Hotmail or Fastmail (**www.fastmail.fm**). Don't exchange phone numbers or reveal your address until you really trust the other person; even then, it's best to provide a mobile number.

For first encounters, meet in a public place and make it informal. Choose a pub, shopping mall or coffee shop rather than a restaurant where it may be difficult to leave if things don't go well. Arrange to arrive separately; don't let the other person pick you up. Ensure that at least one other person knows where you are and when you're due back – and can contact you during the date. A call from a friend also creates an excuse to escape a bad date. Don't feel embarrassed about bringing a friend or leaving early – your date should understand. Finally, keep things short and sweet. There'll be plenty of other times, so just spend an hour or two together. Above all, relax and enjoy yourself. Online dating is meant to be fun! ■

If playing away from home is your idea of fun, AceAlibi claims to offer cast-iron excuses, but we suspect that you sins will eventually catch up with you. Consider yourself warned…

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Canon, Epson,
Lexmark etc
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UK's best deals from Europe's no.1
on-line supplier for inkjet cartridges
FREE UK DELIVERY
0800 9174073

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

WHERE DO THE STARS GO WHEN THEY STOP BEING FAMOUS? THE WEB – THAT'S WHERE! **HAL DEVLIN** TURNS CELEBRITY STALKER AS HE TRACKS DOWN ICONS OF YESTERYEAR

When our thoughts turn to our younger days, we imagine a time when *Seaside Special* was essential Saturday night viewing, Cannon and Ball were the acme of alternative comedy, and the piano stylings of Bobby Crush were loved by grandparents nationwide. These were simpler times, when people became famous for their ability to sing, dance or tell jokes, rather than for getting locked inside a house for six weeks.

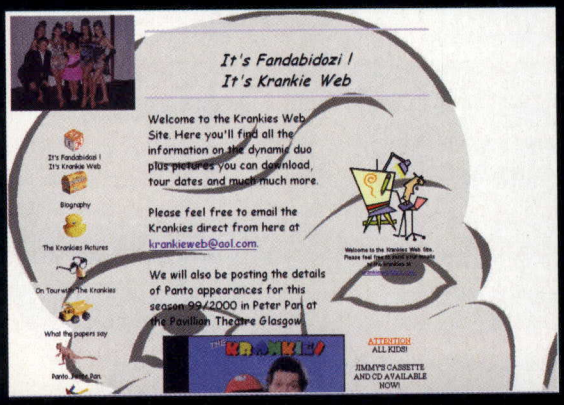
Fate is a cruel and fickle master though, and many of those who ruled the TV airwaves in the Seventies and Eighties have fallen out of favour. What happens when celebrity dwindles? Do they fade into obscurity or continue in some parallel universe, entertaining the masses until they drop? According to the Web, the latter is usually the case. Many 'celebrities' seem to carry on regardless, apparently unaware that their careers have disappeared, continuing to cling on to whatever fame or notoriety they can online.

Some have simply switched to the Web as a means of distributing the things they create. Others use the medium as a way of trumpeting former glories. The best keep in touch directly with their most loyal fans, building sites themselves, adding content and answering mail. And so it is that Eighties pop icon Marilyn keeps his fans appraised of what he's up to (**www.mazontheweb.5u.com**), we know that Right Said Fred are still touring Europe (**www.rightsaidfred.com**) and Paul Daniels' home-made site is about to be replaced by a brand new, professionally designed affair (**www.pauldaniels.co.uk**).

The next time you're wondering where a favourite star of old has disappeared, you'll know exactly where to start your search...

THE KRANKIES

www.thekrankies.cwc.net


It's Fandabidozi !
It's Krankie Web
Welcome to the Krankies Web Site. Here you'll find all the information on the dynamic duo plus pictures you can download, tour dates and much much more.
Please feel free to email the Krankies direct from here at krankieweb@aol.com.
We will also be posting the details of Panto appearances for this season 99/2000 in Peter Pan at the Pavilion Theatre Glasgow
ATTENTION ALL KIDS!
JIMMY'S CASSETTE AND CD AVAILABLE NOW!

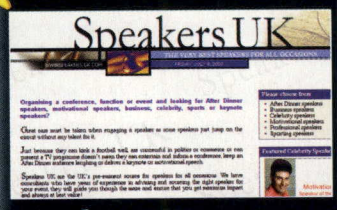
Long before Lily Savage, the Krankies continued the grand British tradition of transgender dressing up for the sake of entertainment

How is it possible to describe the true wonder that was and apparently still is the Krankies? Most famous in the late Seventies and early Eighties, this husband-and-wife duo stuck to the rules of classic comedy teams. He was the straight man, she was the comedian. He was tall, she was short. He dressed in a suit, she wore short trousers, a blazer and carried a catapult.

With the incessant cry of their catchphrase 'Fandabidozi', the Krankies' naughty schoolboy act was all over British TV in the Eighties, but by the Nineties, cabaret acts such as the Krankies, Keith Harris and Bernie Clifton were seen as old hat and sent packing to the seaside shows and Christmas pantos they came from.

The Krankies' site is even more marvellous because it was clearly created by them. A cut-and-paste effort complete with scanned-in press cuttings and brochure clippings, it's worth a visit for the bizarre picture of Janette Krankie dressed as a conical bra-era Madonna.

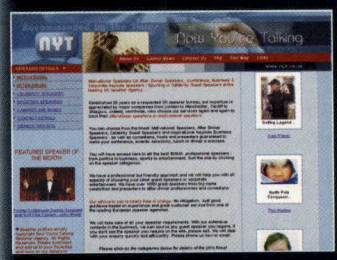
RENT A CELEB



Speakers UK

speakers.uk.com

If you fancy finding out at first hand what your favourite celebrities are up to then why not book a motivational speaker for your next bash? Booking a celeb appearance from the likes of Brian Blessed, Emlyn Hughes or Johnny Ball costs between £2,000 and £20,000 with Speakers UK.



British Guest Speakers

www.nyt.co.uk

Wondering what happened to once-mighty sports superstars like Eddie 'The Eagle' Edwards or Duncan Goodhew? Then pop to British Guest Speakers and organise a visit from your favourite sporting hero. If sporting types don't float your boat, then why not go for Lennie Bennett or Esther Rantzen?

TIFFANY

www.tiffanymusic.com

Tiffany, now a mother in her thirties and still singing 'I Think We're Alone Now' at free gigs on the American college circuit

In 1987 the 17-year-old pop moppet Tiffany had a worldwide number one with 'I Think We're Alone Now', bolstered by a gruelling tour of every shopping mall in the Western hemisphere. Her unique delivery (nasal, flat, unintelligible) ensured that she rapidly disappeared after that first stab at pop fame.

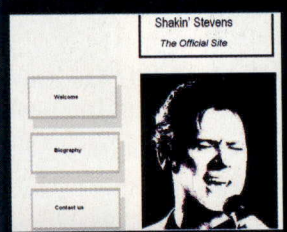
But just like the monsters at the end of horror films, Tiffany has risen again. These days she's a serious singer/songwriter who's appeared in *Playboy* – a sort of pornographic Alanis Morrisette.

Her revamped but strangely out-of-date site pushes the more mature version of Tiffany, emphasising her comeback CD of 2001, *The Color of Silence*. Now that she's all grown up, the whiny wonder writes her own angst-ridden lyrics.

Thankfully, Tiffany doesn't have any plans to appear any time soon in a shopping mall near you.

SHAKIN' STEVENS

www.shakinstevens.com



Shakin' Stevens says, "I don't take kindly to comparisons with Elvis, thank you very much." Allegedly

The 'Welsh Elvis', Shakin' Stevens' career took off in the aftermath of the original King's death. He played the swivel-hipped rocker in *Elvis The Musical* for several years before releasing his own material at the beginning of the Eighties, achieving a creditable hit rate with songs such as 'Green Door' and 'This Ol' House'. Bizarrely sensitive to accusations that he was a mere Elvis impersonator, Stevens (real name Michael Barrett) once physically attacked Richard Madeley on live TV for pointing out the similarities.

Gradually the flood of hits slowed until he found himself without a contract and on a perpetual tour of Europe's variety clubs. Like most stars whose light has dimmed, Shaky's site is in a state of denial. "The hits didn't stop for Stevens, he just stopped releasing records," his online biography states, and points out that a 1999 compilation got to number one in Denmark and number 12 in Norway. "He's now gone back into the studio to record," the blurb continues ominously.

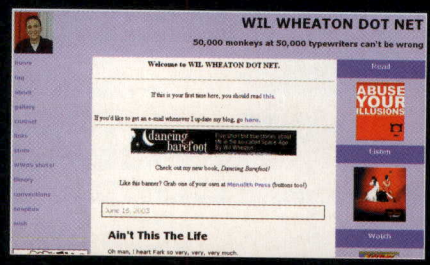
WIL WHEATON

www.wilwheaton.net

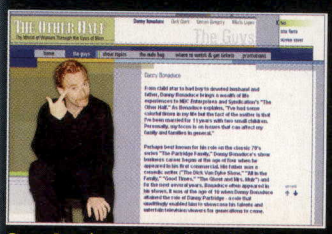
Wil Wheaton, not only Wesley Crusher but also the star of Stand By Me. Not a lot of people know that

For a heady time, Wil Wheaton was the most despised character in *Star Trek* history. When Paramount Pictures resuscitated the sci-fi soap opera in the late Eighties, they filled the Enterprise with a cast of new characters. Among them was Wesley Crusher, a 13-year-old brat who was soon driving the Enterprise and saving the crew on a weekly basis. Trek fans' displeasure at Wesley's antics sent tremors through the network. The character inspired the notorious newsgroup alt.wesley.crusher.die.die.die, and anti-Crusher sites multiplied like tribbles.

More than a decade on, and Wil Wheaton, the actor saddled with interpreting Crusher's brattish antics, is fighting back. Now carving out a parallel career as a stand-up comedian, Wheaton's extensive Web journal is that rarest of things, a site about someone famous that's actually made by someone famous. Okay, maybe 'famous' is stretching it a bit – but he's definitely involved in every aspect from coding to design. What's more, it's funny. Wil is unapologetically geeky, self-effacing and quite candid about the way he was perceived. "I suspect the composer of the Enterprise theme tune will be the new holder of the 'Most Hated Person In Star Trek' title," he says. "If they call, I'll hand over the badge..."



SEARCH FOR A NOBODY



Danny Bonaduce turned to drugs after the success of the Partridge Family waned. His eventful lifestyle made him easy to track down on the Web

Remember the red-haired, tombstone-toothed brother who always had the funniest lines, the best stories and the most questionable parentage in the *Partridge Family*? So did we. Trouble was, we couldn't remember his name. First stop – the Internet Movie Database (**www.imdb.com**). By a process of elimination we discovered our target was Danny Bonaduce, character name Danny Partridge. Another click and we had a list of his films. Things looked like they were going fine for Bonaduce until 1979, when the list of work trails away to nothing.

We went to the mighty search engine Google (**www.google.com**) with the term 'Danny Bonaduce'. Then we added the term 'drugs' just for fun. It turns out that Danny is the author of an autobiography called *Random Acts of Badness* where he talks extensively about how hard drugs turned him into a table-munching wreck for most of the Eighties. Who'd have thought it?

Still, he seems to have turned things around. After moving into a career as a radio DJ, he's now working on *The Other Half*, a TV talk show (**www.theotherhalf.tv**). It's unfortunate that Danny's profile is still so high, because it makes him easy to track down by people like the loony responsible for The Partridge Family Temple (**www.partridgefamilytemple.com**) who claims that: "Danny is the Trickster god. He is the creator of all chaos." Oh dear.

GARY COLEMAN

webathon.ugo.com/

In the Eighties Gary Coleman was a cheeky-faced little guy with an attitude. Now he's a cheeky-faced little guy with a moustache...

Only in the Seventies could a TV programme like *Diff'rent Strokes* have survived. In this US sitcom two young black kids were adopted by a rich, white, single parent, and much hilarity ensued from the resulting culture clash. The undisputed star of the show was Gary Coleman who, with his cheeky grin and catchphrase, 'What you talkin' about Willis?', made his way into the hearts of his audience. The series ran for a staggering eight years, but when it ended Coleman found himself unemployable. In his pre-teens Gary's diminutive stature and old-before-his-time manner made him endearing to others. When he hit puberty those characteristics began to work against him. Rumours even circulated that Coleman had been a 30-year-old midget all along.

In 1999, Web entertainment network UGO came to his rescue and decided they could turn the former child star's fortunes around. Now that he actually is a 30-year-old midget his appeal has come full-circle. It started with the Gary Coleman Webathon – an attempt to persuade UGO users to donate to Coleman's diminished coffers. Still thriving, you can visit **www.garycolemanhasaposse.com** to hear Gary's exclusive interview with answers about the 'curse' of *Diff'rent Strokes* that left most of the cast dead or in jail. There are also Gary games galore and the 'Posse' pages, dedicated to keeping Coleman's face in the public eye.

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BUILD YOUR VERY OWN DATABASE-DRIVEN WEB SITE – SEE PAGE 58

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO BUILD STUNNING SITES

Webmaster

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WELCOME...

SOMETIMES YOU HAVE to bite the bullet and accept that there are no longer easy routes to success. We've been showing you database-type Web design concepts for some months now, but have shied away from getting into the nitty gritty, simply because databases are so complicated.

You've shown us that's what you want, though, so this month we start the first of a three-part series on how you can generate your own database-driven site in Dreamweaver. This month, we set up your local server with PHP and Apache. Enjoy!

Thomas Watson, Editor

What's inside...

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We get the inside story on the BBC's new experience, Fightbox

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We show how you can make your life a whole lot easier with FTP

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Give your site more oomph with our front end, designed with Flash MX

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We show how to set up a server on your local machine in part one

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Super James Seabright provides salvation for Web design disasters

Flash interfaces

TURN YOUR STATIC SITE INTO A MULTIMEDIA AFFAIR WITH THE HELP OF THE VENERABLE FLASH MX – SEE PAGE 54

Also in Webmaster this issue...

We persuade the BBC to break the first, second and third rules of FightBox to give us the lowdown on how the next-generation robot site was created

Dreamweaver MX is undoubtedly one of the finest packages around, but there's always room for improvement. We give you tips and advice on getting more from the program

How we built... Fightbox.co.uk

WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE WEB SITE THAT HOPES TO LAUNCH BONE-CRUNCHING CYBER-COMBAT ONTO A SCREEN NEAR YOU

It must have taken some bottle for the plucky ideas man to burst into Auntie's commissioning offices with FightBox. "Okay, what have you got for me?" Director-General Greg Dyke might have snapped. "Well sir, it's a game show, but not as we know it..." Eschewing the cosy conventions of chequebooks and pens, conveyer belts and the dulcet tones of Wogan or Monkhouse, this would be a virtual brawl-fest. "Please Mr.Dyke, think of Robot Wars but with downloadable Internet monsters that scrap it out for a place on an interactive TV showcase," our hero may have stammered. At this point the big cheese might have risen grandly to his feet, cigar clamped between his teeth, and delivered his verdict: "I don't know who you are son, and frankly I don't care... but I love it!"

That may be an inaccurate and overly romantic version of events, but the point remains – FightBox is one of the BBC's most interesting and exciting projects in recent times. Spearheaded by its interactive range of services including digital TV and the Web, the initiative is to unite a range of popular entertainment media. Contestants download special software from the dedicated site to create and train warriors just as they would in a video game. These fighters can be used in qualifying scenarios where combat points are awarded. Live programmes will then host the Leaderboard's top players as they battle it out for on-air supremacy. The result is a unique show that pulls together an audience of computer users, gamers and telly viewers in a totally new way. "We were looking for a way to bring the best of all of these elements together in a 'crossover' show," explains Mike Dicks, Director of FightBox Ltd. "The team who originated the idea wanted to create an event, a new sport if you like, where people who play games can compete and be recognised for their skills."

With the show not set to air until later this year, it meant that much emphasis would be placed on the site to generate interest. Importantly, it would also provide the downloadable kits needed to play the game, although the developers maintain that creating a community was also vital. "The site is designed to be the centre of a community of FightBox fans and competitors," Dicks insists. "Initially it needed to promote the concept and encourage people to sign up, but as we move into the vital qualification period, it becomes something more akin to a Premier league or Formula One site, where people chat, trade tips and equipment, and form alliances."

> **"THE SITE IS DESIGNED TO BE THE CENTRE OF A COMMUNITY OF FIGHTBOX FANS AND COMPETITORS"** MIKE DICKS

United we stand

In fact one of the impressions you get when visiting the site is that although FightBox is essentially a competition, its fan base is strangely united. This tends to mirror the world of online gaming, where whole groups of players get together and hierarchies emerge. "The tribes that have formed, like Kaizen, are as a result of requests from players," Dicks enthuses. "They've now started their own Web sites and we keep in touch with the tribe 'leaders' who even help us with testing new software."

It seems that providing message boards and forums has not only facilitated communication among players but provided feedback for the developers. "With a project like this it's difficult to research what the audience wants, as it's unique," Dicks reveals. "That's why we wanted to put the site up so early."

It is this rather unorthodox pre-empting of the show that Mike feels has helped assess user opinion: "Traditionally a TV Web site would go up when the series starts, but we've been live since April, and with over 50,000 players registered, we're getting plenty of feedback and suggestions."

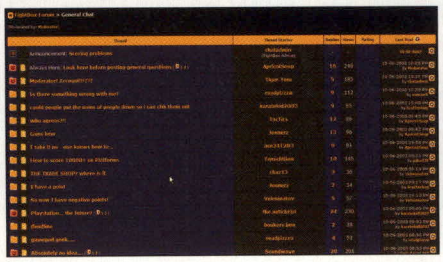
One of the strategies that the FightBox team has for the site is its evolution throughout the project. If the initial purpose was to promote the concept and scout for contestants, then the content will widen once the TV series begins. As well as featuring support for registered users, the idea is to eventually support the show with news, presenter info, competitor profiles and behind-the-scenes gossip.

What's more, as the project progresses the developers may look to push the boundaries of interactive entertainment. "The FightBox site is the front end of a complex database, with profiles, scores and warrior components all there," says Dicks. "That means we can use them in a number of ways, so we are exploring some interactive TV content as well as mobile phones and handheld computers."

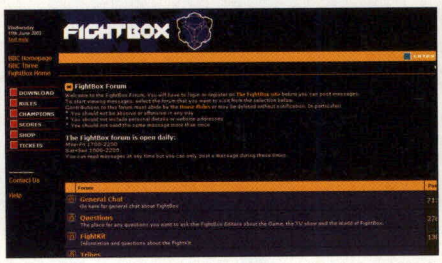
The Gallery gives you a sneaky peak at some of the enemies and challenges that await you in FightBox

An uncomplicated home page welcomes new contestants to the show, with links to news, downloads and more

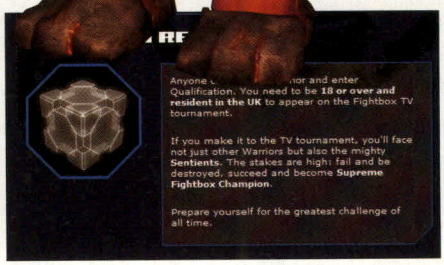
Downloading the FightKit software allows you to create your ultimate fighting machine from scratch



Contestants will be selected for having the best FightBox scores, and the Leaderboard page shows who you have to beat



A real community of fellow fighters has emerged, and the forums let everyone share playing hints and gossip


Qualification. You need to be 18 or over and resident in the UK to appear on the Fightbox TV tournament.
If you make it to the TV tournament, you'll face not just other Warriors but also the mighty Sentients. The stakes are high: fail and be destroyed, succeed and become Supreme Fightbox Champion.
Prepare yourself for the greatest challenge of all time.

If you're having problems with the site or the game itself, the online FAQ has the answer

At this early stage he cannot confirm that these features will appear in the first series, but Mike is in no doubt that FightBox should continue to push the technological envelope: "Like any good game we'd like to keep improving it as technology develops."

In many ways this dynamic and almost maverick attitude could possibly be attributed to the way the concept was commissioned by the Beeb. In a seemingly unusual twist, the site was totally outsourced to FightBox Ltd, a partnership between Ricochet Digital and Bomb Productions, who also makes the show. Due to the nature of the project, Web, TV and game elements had to work together closely to ensure integration. Fortunately the producers were confident that the necessary skills were available under one roof, but this didn't stop the site's production turning into a real effort. "The initial site took six weeks to build, including the database architecture, design and coding, and we've been adding to it ever since," explains Dicks. "The support team has taken over maintaining and developing the site, and will do so until the series ends."

Fighting together

Surprisingly, all this work was conducted by a specialist team of only six – some of whom crossed over into the games team to ensure compatibility. The site was coded from scratch, including PHP database functionality and dynamic pages, right through to the HTML. One of the biggest challenges the team faced during the process was meeting tight deadlines: "Like any major project, time is always against us," Dicks reveals. "We've been working on the site build since January and the game since last August, which for a project this wide-ranging is a relatively short time."

Dicks felt that another difficulty was achieving cohesion between the many elements: "Working on so many strands of the project, our other challenge was to maintain a FightBox feel to all the components." There were also some pretty tough decisions to be made about user support. The problem was conveying an environment on users' PCs that would simulate the TV experience. "The Web site itself is very accessible," says Mike. "However, the FightKit is a fully-fledged computer game and as such it needs certain specifications in place to work. Very early on we considered using a lower spec game, but it would have meant that the people who qualified would not be prepared for the finals."

Using the site to distribute the software only added to the headache, with concerns over download size and speed. "We've created smaller, quicker versions of the kit that players can add to over time to help with this," explains Dicks, "and there will be a CD available of the full kit that people can obtain."

If user feedback is anything to go by, the team can consider their concern and effort well worthwhile. They look on elements of the site, including Warrior Profile pages and Leaderboards, with some pride, but remain philosophical about their achievements: "On the whole everyone is very pleased with the site, the game and the whole idea," reports Dicks. "It's still early days for us, so we'll judge it better when FightBox I is completed." In the fickle world of television this could prove a wise move, as it remains to be seen whether the show will convince bosses it has a future. Dicks, however, remains refreshingly optimistic about what is to come, and even tips the series as the start of something special: "There are so many possibilities for this merged format that of course we're keen to develop more, so watch this space." ■

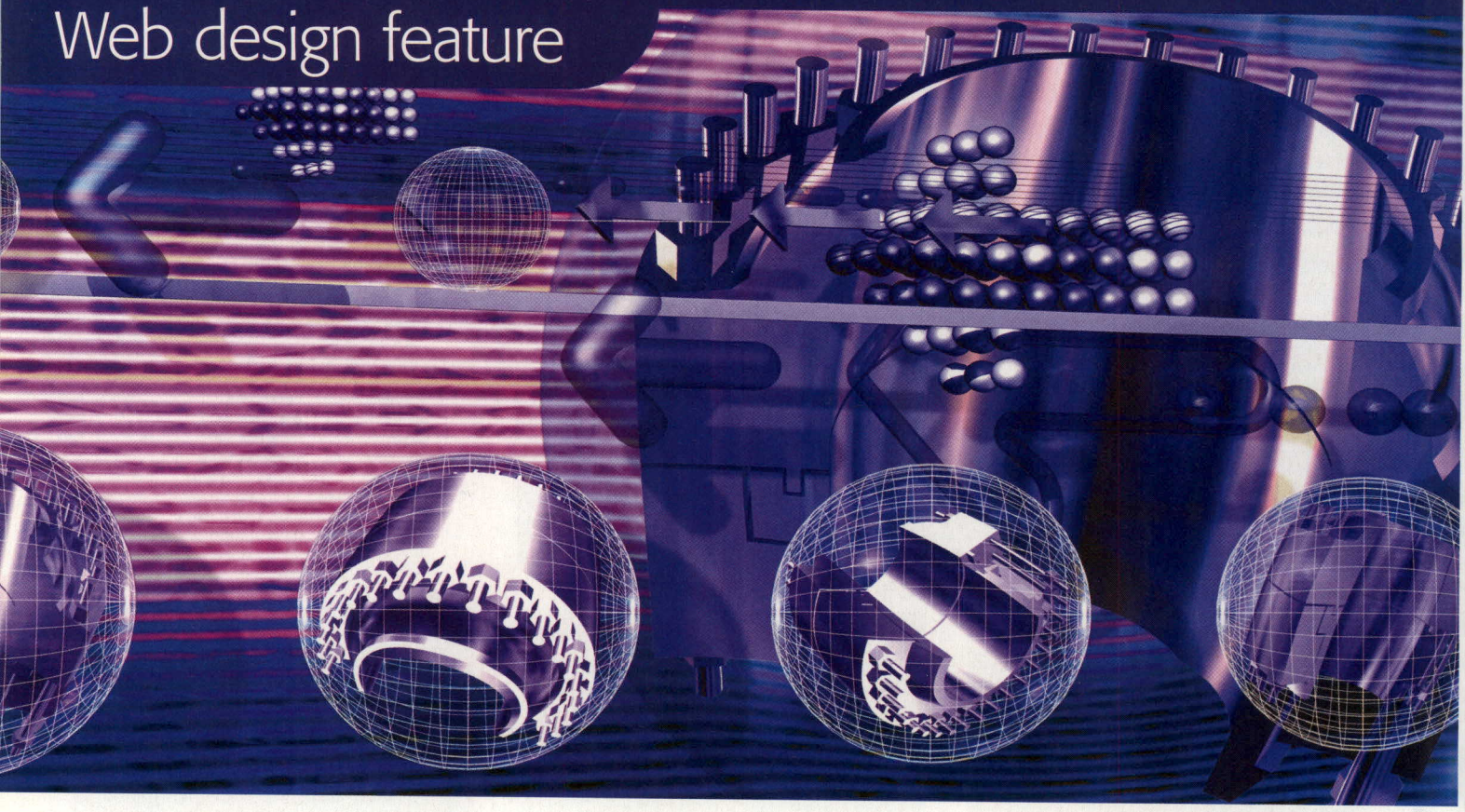
Site stats

FightBox
www.bbcfightbox.co.uk

- **Who designed it?**
  FightBox Ltd
- **Number of people involved?**
  A specialist team of six
- **Software used?**
  PHP and HTML hand-coded
- **Registered users?**
  Over 50,000

TIME SCALE

- **Aug 2002** – Work begins on FightKit game
- **Jan 2003** – Site development gets under way
- **Feb 2003** – Initial site build complete
- **April 2003** – Web site goes live
- **July 2003** – Filming begins for TV show
- **Autumn 2003** – FightBox set to hit screens



Upload Web sites more effectively with FTP

FTP IS NOT AS COMPLICATED AS YOU MAY THINK. WE TALK YOU THOUGH THE PROCESS AND DISCUSS THE PROS AND CONS OF VARIOUS METHODS

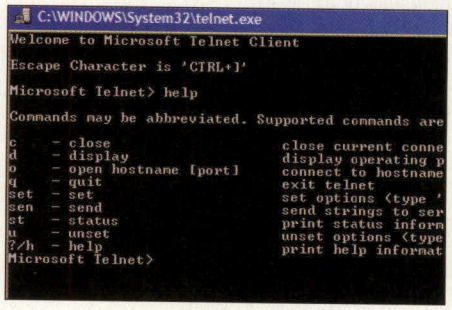
So you've spent your time getting to know HTML, figuring out Flash and manoeuvring your way through Photoshop – but what comes next? Once you've finished designing and testing your Web site, you need to physically put all that data onto a Web server. To do this you have to use File Transfer Protocol (FTP). Basically, you need a server ready to accept data and a client program that can deliver it.

If you are a confident computer user, you can just dial in to the server using a Telnet application (most Windows Operating Systems come with their own Telnet software) and manually upload your data by typing the command verbs defined in the File Transfer Protocol. These commands use the UNIX language to communicate with the server and can be quite daunting for the first-timer.

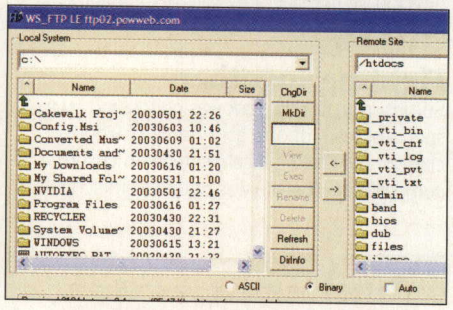
If you are using Windows and fancy giving this technique a go, click on 'Start' then 'Run' and type 'telnet' before pressing 'OK' to activate the Microsoft Telnet application. A new window will open and you can type 'help' to access a list of commands. For a full list of FTP commands, pay a visit to **www.ftpplanet.com/ftpresources/rfc959.txt**. You will need to have a hostname that allows FTP access, and your user name and password at the ready to log on. But be warned, in this age of hack attacks, many Web-hosting companies don't allow Telnet access to their servers, so check this out first before trying to connect, as it will save you time and much hair-pulling.

Of course, one slip-up or mistake and you could find yourself deleting important files or causing problems that would be time-consuming to put right. This is why most folk now use an FTP application to upload the files for them. This software replicates the process of typing in the FTP command verbs by the click of a button, and so takes the pain out of uploading files.

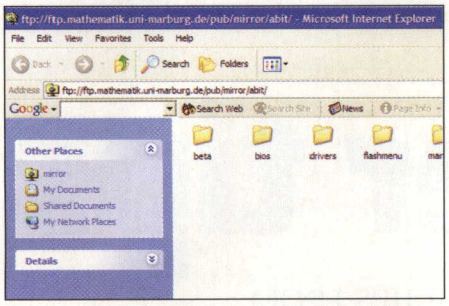
One of the most popular FTP applications is WS_FTP from software specialists, Ipswitch. The reason it's so popular is that it's really easy to use and, more importantly, the LE version is absolutely free. If you haven't already, you can download WS_FTP from **www.ipswitch.com/support/ws_ftp_le_support.html**. Once you've



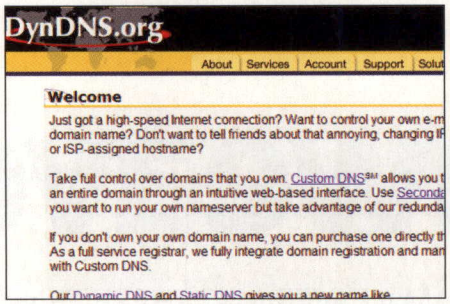
Using the Telnet application to log in to a Web server may be a little daunting for the inexperienced Web user



One of the easiest FTP clients to use is WS_FTP from Ipswitch, which makes file transfer a doddle



Using Internet Explorer 6 as an FTP client is a lot easier than you might think – and it's completely free!


DynDNS.org
About
Services
Account
Support
Welcome
Just got a high-speed Internet connection? Want to control your own e-m
domain name? Don't want to tell friends about that annoying, changing IP
or ISP-assigned hostname?
Take full control over domains that you own. Custom DNS℠ allows you t
an entire domain through an intuitive web-based interface. Use Seconda
you want to run your own nameserver but take advantage of our redunda
If you don't own your own domain name, you can purchase one directly th
As a full service registrar, we fully integrate domain registration and man
with Custom DNS.

If you intend to host an FTP server from a dynamic IP address, you will need to use a dynamic DNS redirection service

installed the software, you will need to set up your login details – which just amounts to entering your server details, username and password. Then you can connect.

Once you are connected, you can navigate through the Web server using the right pane, while the left pane relates to all the files on your hard drive. To move files, you simply select the location using the right pane, select the files from the left pane and press the 'Transfer' button (which looks like >>). The rest of the commands such as Delete or Rename are accessible via buttons on the application. However, you can access advanced commands by pressing the right mouse button and selecting 'Commands' from the menu.

IE6 equals FTP

Of course, you don't even need an FTP application to do your uploading if you are using Windows and Internet Explorer 6. Unbelievably, you can use IE6 to do all your FTP work for you too. The trick is to open a new Internet Explorer window and in the URL box type the following (replacing the example text with your details): **ftp://username:password@yourserver.address**. This will log you into your Web server and display all the files in the window in a pseudo-File Explorer style, but be aware that it may take a little a time to connect.

With the connection displayed in the main browser window of Internet Explorer, you can easily drag files from your File Explorer (or even your desktop) straight onto your Web server. To create new sub-directories using IE6, just right-click your mouse and select 'New', 'Folder'. If you are familiar with using File Explorer to navigate folders, you will have no problem finding your way around a Web server with IE6.

"YOU CAN USE INTERNET EXPLORER 6 TO DO ALL YOUR FTP WORK FOR YOU"

Serve it up

But there's more to FTP than just uploading files. With a little freeware software, you can turn your PC into an FTP server. You're probably wondering why you'd want to do this, but the benefits are clear if you deal with a number of big files. For example, imagine you want to send some high-resolution pictures to your family abroad, but your ISP puts a 2Mb limit on email attachments. What can you do to get around this? You can set up an FTP server.

With the right software, you can leave your PC connected to the Internet and allow your friends and relatives to access files on your PC with a username and password, keeping unwanted users out. You can also let people upload files to your PC using this software. One such piece of software you might want to try is War FTP (**www.warftp.org**), which is regarded as the top FTP server for Windows. However, it's more than likely that your ISP issues your PC with a dynamic IP address every time you log on to the Internet. This means that anyone wishing to access your FTP would need to know your IP address, which is constantly changing. To get around this problem, you'll need to sign up to a dynamic DNS redirection service such as DynDNS (**www.dyndns.org**).

But if you do decide to run an FTP server from your PC, please make sure you have a reputable firewall installed, as your computer could be more susceptible to hack attacks while running FTP services.

Geek speak

FTP
Short for File Transfer Protocol, this is the protocol, or language, used for moving files to and from Web servers. It was originally developed in 1985 and is based on the UNIX programming language.

UNIX
A popular multi-tasking operating system that was developed at Bell Labs in the Seventies. It was written in the programming language C, which means it can run on almost any computer with an appropriate compiler. Because of its stability, it has become the most popular language for running workstations and servers.

Telnet
A terminal emulation application for TCP/IP networks, most notably the Internet. The Telnet program runs on your PC and connects to a remote server using TCP/IP. You can enter commands using the Telnet application and they will be executed on the remote server as if you were entering them manually.

Server
A computer device connected to a network (or the Internet) that manages network resources. For example, on the Internet you would have a Web server, which is a computer that stores Web pages and delivers them to browsers. On a local network you might find a print server, which manages all the traffic to the network's printers.

IP address
An identifying number for a computer connected to a TCP/IP network (or the Internet). The format is a 32-bit address made up of four numbers, each of which can be between zero and 255. A static IP address remains the same and doesn't change, while a dynamic IP address is constantly changing when the computer connects to the network.

FTP clients

Name: WS_FTP LE
URL: www.ipswitch.com
Price: Free
This is the best freeware FTP application for Windows. With the minimum of fuss, you'll be connected to your site and uploading files before you can say 'Bill Gates is a really nice chap'.

Name: Internet Explorer 6
URL: www.microsoft.com/ie
Price: Free
Besides being a leading Web browser, IE6 can handle all your FTP needs. Type your username, password and server details into the URL bar and you can drag and drop files straight onto the Web.

Name: War FTP
URL: www.warftp.org
Price: Free
So you want to run your own FTP server? You could spend your hard-earned cash on a full-price software suite – or you could download this little freeware beauty instead.

Dreamweaver tips

NEED A LITTLE HELP WITH DREAMWEAVER MX? THESE TEN TOP TIPS FROM **DARREN LOCK** WILL HELP YOU GET THE BEST FROM THE POPULAR WYSIWYG PACKAGE

1 Create a rollover

Adding rollovers to your Web site can give that visual touch of flair that is all too often missing, and this is really easy to do with Dreamweaver. To begin with, you need to export your two images (the static image and the rollover image) from Fireworks MX into Dreamweaver MX and then click on 'Insert', 'Interactive Images' and 'Rollover Image'. Name the image, choose the images from the Folder icon, and finally add a link to the image. You will now have a great-looking rollover animation on your Web page.

2 Create a template

One way of saving time in Dreamweaver MX is to create a template, which you can then use over and over again. Create a basic page which you want to use as your template, and click on 'File', 'Save As Template'. Name the template file and click on 'Save'.

You will now be working with your template file, and you need to make areas available that can be editable. To do this, click on the area you want to be editable and then click on 'Modify', 'Template' and 'New Editable Region'. Give this region an appropriate name. You can repeat this process in order to create a number of editable areas.

3 Resizing images

If you resize your image in Dreamweaver MX, you can save yourself the trouble of opening the image in Fireworks MX, resizing it and exporting it again. Click on 'Commands', 'Optimise Images in Fireworks', and a dialog box saying 'Editing image.gif. Do you wish to use an existing Fireworks document as the source of image.gif?' will appear. Click on the 'No' option and then click 'Update'. The image will now be updated without all that extra fuss.

4 Creating custom buttons

If you are using buttons within Dreamweaver MX, you might want to create your own custom 'Submit' or 'Go' buttons to give your site that personal touch. Use Fireworks MX to create your custom button and save it in a place where you can find it. In Dreamweaver MX, click on 'Insert', 'Form Object Image Field' and select the custom button image that you've just saved. You will now have a customised Submit button for your site.

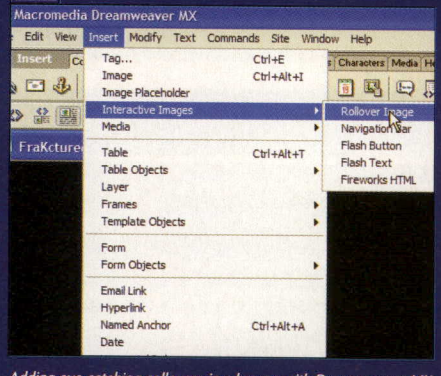
5 Using image maps

Dreamweaver MX comes with its very own image map editor, and you can use this to create clickable images. Import the image you want to use as an image map in your Web page, and click on the aforementioned picture to select it. Now, from the Properties menu, select one of the three image map drawing tools – 'Rectangle', 'Circle' or 'Polygon'. Use this tool to draw the hotspot on your image, and then in the Properties window for the hotspot, type in the Web address for the URL you want the hotspot to link to. You can continue adding separate hotspots on your image until you are satisfied. To finish, preview your image in a browser and make sure that the image hot spots trigger off correctly.

6 Creating Dreamweaver MX Snippets

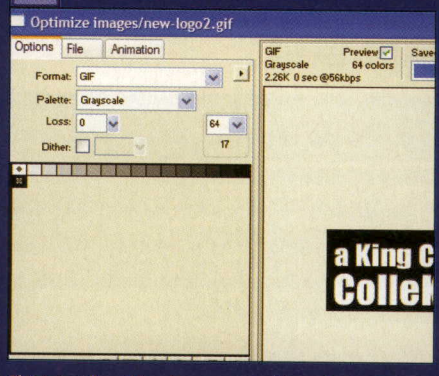
A Snippet in Dreamweaver MX is a toolset that allows you to save blocks of code that you use regularly and retrieve them easily. In Dreamweaver MX, click on 'Window Snippets' (or press 'SHIFT' + 'F9') and you

1



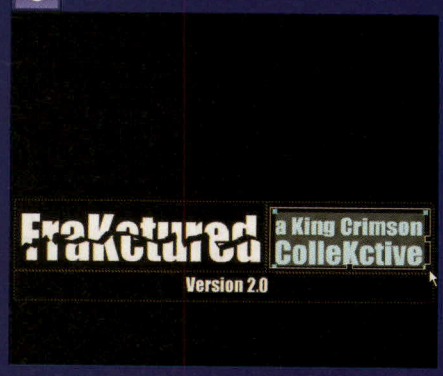
Adding eye-catching rollovers is a breeze with Dreamweaver MX

3



This is a really quick and easy way to edit your images

5



Use image maps to link to multiple sources from the same graphic

will see that the application comes already pre-installed with a number of useful Snippets for you to use.

Use your mouse to highlight the code you want to transform into a Snippet and then click on the 'New Snippet' icon. Give the Snippet its very own name and a description for your personal reference. If the code in the Snippet is to wrap around text on the page, select 'Wrap Selection', or select 'Insert Block' if you want the code to be inserted as a new block. If you haven't selected any code for the Snippet, you can also type it in now. When you're ready, press 'OK' to save your finished Snippet.

7 Creating a Mail Form

If you want people to communicate with you via your Web site, what better way to encourage them than by creating a Mail Form? To do this, click on the 'Forms' tab of the Insert bar and click on the 'Forms' icon. You will now need to enter the properties for the Form box, so enter in the Properties box:
action: mailto:your@email.address
method: GET
Enctype: text/plain.

Now choose which fields you want to include in your Mail Form and then add a Submit button by clicking the 'Button' icon, making sure that the action is set to 'Submit Form'. Now save your file and test it on your Web site. But remember that using mailto forms successfully is largely dependent upon the browser your viewer uses and their email client.

8 Changing views

When you first start up Dreamweaver MX, you are asked whether you want to continue using the new, improved Dreamweaver MX workspace, or whether you want to use the old Dreamweaver 4 setup. If you change your mind, you can go back and select the alternative workspace setup by clicking on 'Edit', then 'Preferences'. On the Preferences menu, click on the 'Change Workspace' button and make your selection, before pressing 'OK' twice to return to Dreamweaver MX. You can repeat this process if you wish.

9 Checking for broken links

One of the major bugbears of any Web designer is the dreaded broken link. Before you upload your finished site to the Web server, you need to have a thorough check for any of these.

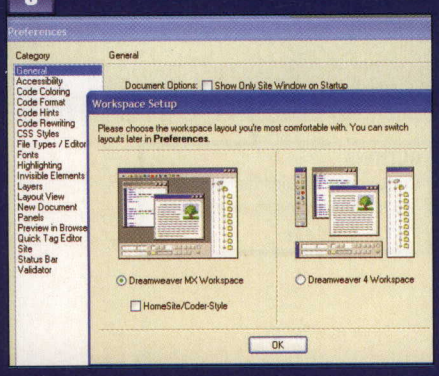
Of course, you can do this manually, and it is often better to enlist the services of a friend (or someone who hasn't worked on the site). But Dreamweaver MX allows you to check for broken links automatically. Go to the site map, right click on any of the files displayed and select 'Check Links'. You can choose to check the links within the entire site or folder. If you do find any problems, you now have a good chance of fixing them.

10 Keyboard shortcuts

Macromedia just loves putting keyboard shortcuts into its products, and Dreamweaver MX is no exception – there's literally a shortcut for every process available in the software. However, instead of us trying to list them all here, we'll simply give you a handy method you can use to quickly access this list and learn your favourite shortcuts in your own time. Just click on 'Edit', 'Keyboard Shortcuts', and you're there!

This menu also allows the user to edit and store their very own keyboard shortcuts as well. How user friendly is that?

8

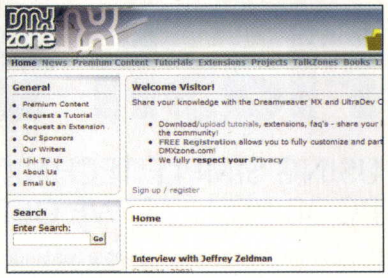


If you wish, you can change the workspace to a previous version

10

There's a shortcut for every single process in the software

Dreamweaver delights



DMX Zone

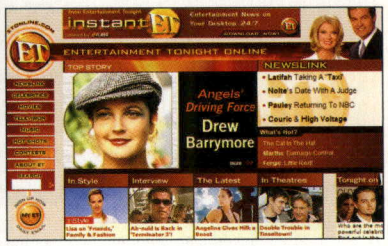
www.dmxzone.com

If these tips have whetted your appetite and you're on the hunt for even more Dreamweaver tips and tutorials, head for this site. It also lets users request specific tutorials and Dreamweaver extensions, and is generally one of the better communities available for this software.

The Museum of Modern Art

www.moma.org

Here's the scenario: the world's foremost modern art museum needs to upgrade its Web strategy and decides to use Dreamweaver MX to build its new site. The result is a remarkably clean and easy-to-use site that gets across the message of MOMA without using gimmicky effects.



Entertainment Tonight Online

www.etonline.com

Boosted by being a top USA entertainment news show, this site was created using Dreamweaver MX, and is dynamic and fizzy, just how an entertainment site should be. The designers used Fireworks MX, Flash MX and Dreamweaver MX to create a site that's accessible yet eye-catching.

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In brief:
Task: Design a creative interface
Software I need: Flash MX
Difficulty: It's not too difficult
Time I need: Half an hour

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

Get creative with Flash the easy way

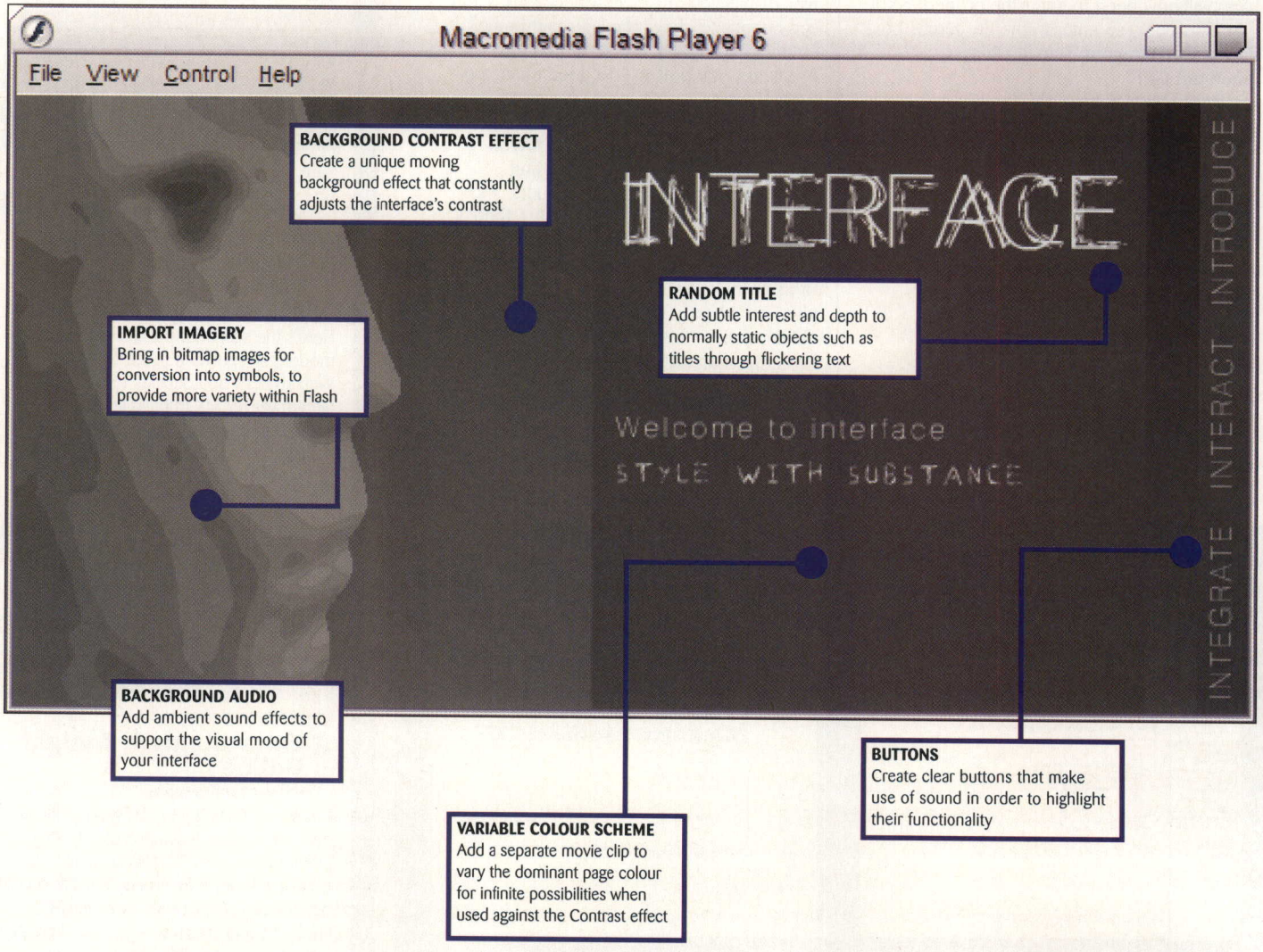
USING SIMPLE TECHNIQUES IN FLASH DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN SUFFERING POOR RESULTS. WE GET CREATIVE WITH SOME ORIGINAL INTERFACE DESIGN...

FLASH IS AN incredibly versatile tool, and with a little imagination the potential is almost limitless. The following tutorial introduces some novel design methods for creating original results that you can easily adopt into your work, and gives some food for thought on creating your own original results.

Because of space limitations we're only concentrating on getting the initial interface up and running, including introducing each of the interface components. We've also included background sound along with adding 'audio to' buttons, created some seemingly random background effects with colour variations, and made use of movie clips to create self-animated components within our main interface.

Once you've completed the steps you should have enough knowledge of the software to continue the interface design, with the addition of content for the buttons to link through to, by adding more scenes or embedding named text areas for targeting.

All the assets we refer to can be found on the cover disc including the final SWF file, so you can see what the animated end result should look like in a far better way than the screenshot below can illustrate.


Macromedia Flash Player 6
File View Control Help
INTERFACE
INTEGRATE INTERACT INTRODUCE
Welcome to interface
STYLE WITH SUBSTANCE
BACKGROUND CONTRAST EFFECT
Create a unique moving background effect that constantly adjusts the interface's contrast
IMPORT IMAGERY
Bring in bitmap images for conversion into symbols, to provide more variety within Flash
RANDOM TITLE
Add subtle interest and depth to normally static objects such as titles through flickering text
BACKGROUND AUDIO
Add ambient sound effects to support the visual mood of your interface
VARIABLE COLOUR SCHEME
Add a separate movie clip to vary the dominant page colour for infinite possibilities when used against the Contrast effect
BUTTONS
Create clear buttons that make use of sound in order to highlight their functionality

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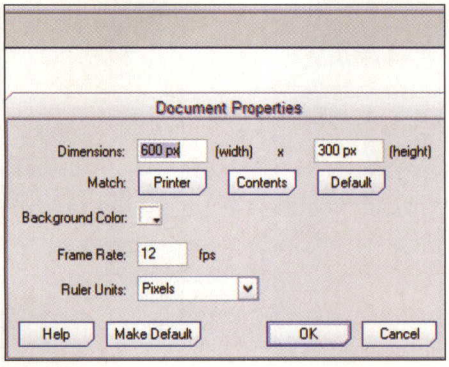
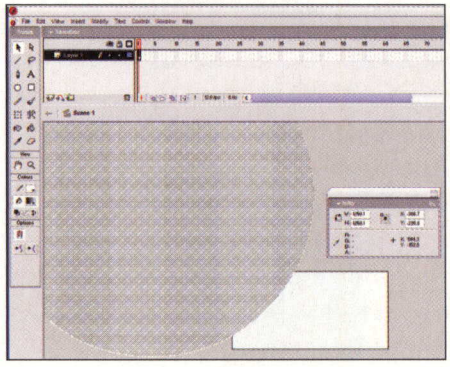

Document Properties
Dimensions: 600 px (width) x 300 px (height)
Match: Printer Contents Default
Background Color:
Frame Rate: 12 fps
Ruler Units: Pixels
Help Make Default OK Cancel

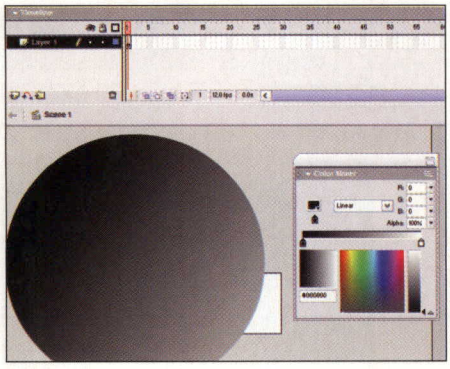
1 Setting the scene

Create a new file and click 'Modify', 'Document' to change the dimensions to 600x300 pixels. Leave the Frame Rate set at '12fps' and ignore the background colour, as this is determined by our design. Hit 'OK' to return to the resized movie canvas.



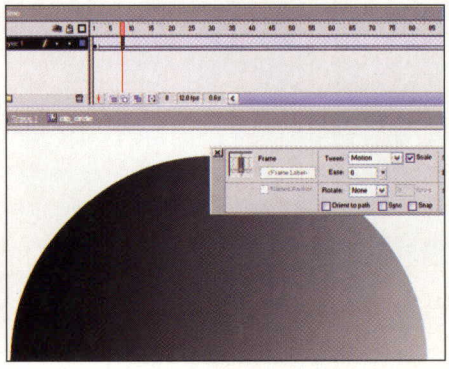
2 Big circle

Holding the 'SHIFT' key, use the Oval tool to create a perfect circle. Delete the stroke and use the 'Info' panel to adjust the dimensions of the circle to 1250x1250, creating a giant circle that will rotate to provide the background 'lava lamp' effect.



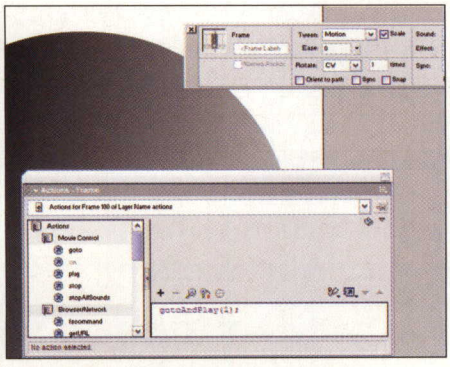
3 Gradient ahead

Open the 'Colour Mixer' palette and choose a 'Linear' gradient, setting the extreme colour to black and white. Now use the 'Paint Bucket' tool to drag the gradient fill over the circle. Convert this into a graphic symbol via the 'Insert' menu.



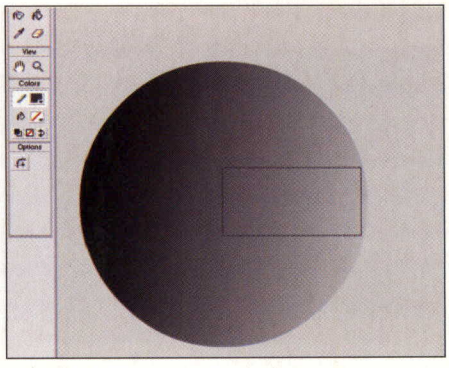
4 Movie clip

Create and open a new movie clip symbol and drag the original circle graphic symbol onto the canvas. Use the 'Align' options to centre in place and add a keyframe at frame 100 in the timeline, setting a motion tween between the frames.



5 Round and round

Create a new layer with a keyframe in the last frame adding a 'goto' Action to return and play frame 1. Back on the tween of the circle, set this to rotate clockwise for one revolution. Play to see the circle rotate.



6 Position the effect

Return to the scene and position the movie clip so the centre of the clip is aligned to the left of the canvas, while horizontally central. Test your movie and play back the generated SWF file to see the effect in action.

Jargon buster

Stroke and fill

These are common terms which are used in all vector illustration packages, including Illustrator and Freehand, that refer to an object's outline and content. A stroke is the line surrounding an object, while the fill refers to the block colour contained within the stroke. You can delete either component if you wish, or use the Colour palette in order to change their values to become transparent or to match the object's fill colour.

Symbols

Once an element has been created it can be converted into an object known as a 'symbol', which Flash can re-use without increasing your movie's file size. Graphic symbols are for basic image objects; buttons are provided with four frames by default, to allow behaviours for Normal, Over, Down and Hit states; and movie clips are effectively mini self-contained Flash movies. Once created, your symbols are accessible from the Library panel.

Frames and keyframes

The Flash timeline is sequentially divided into a number of defined steps which are known as 'frames'. The number of frames used depends on the relationship between the time and frame rate of your movie. Keyframes are points that you define as containing a specified action to occur, and can be as simple as an object appearing on the movie canvas. With no keyframes defined, an object would revert to the beginning of the movie, meaning that the timeline would become redundant.

Tweens

No, it's not the collective noun for a certain group of kids' TV characters, but an animation term that derives from the words 'In between'. Flash allows 'motion tweens' that automatically fill in the positional attributes between a start and end point, as well as 'shape tweens' which help to morph one shape into another. Shape tweening is a little more complex than its motion counterpart, because common anchors need to be defined on the start and end shapes.

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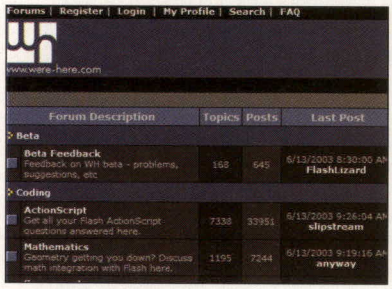
Web resources

Pope de Flash
www.popedeflash.com

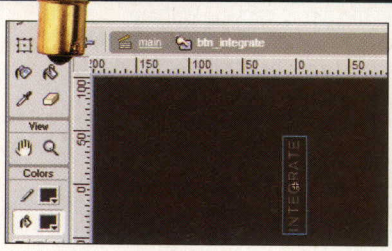
An excellent site that manages to provide a rare balance of inspiration and advice. Check out the tutorials for tips and the Portfolio area to see what can be done.



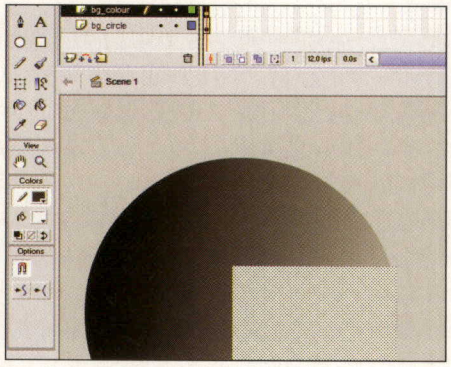
We're Here Forums
www.were-here.com

The Flash community forum site is arguably busier than that run by Macromedia. If you run into problems someone here will be only too glad to help out.

Power users' tip

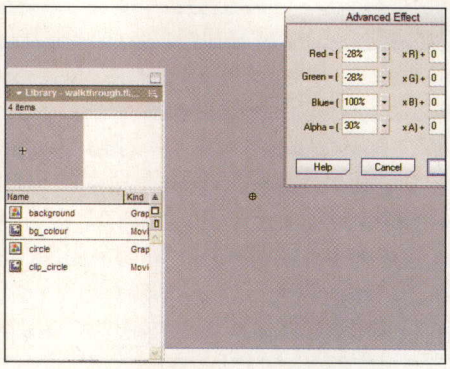


WHEN CREATING OBJECTS like buttons that will all be based on the same idea, create a single button containing the states, and duplicate the completed symbol. Rename the duplicate to suit the purpose of the new button and edit the text to reflect its new attributes. Make sure alignment is consistent throughout each state, or buttons will move around when different states are invoked. Also ensure the invisible hit area is adjusted to contain the new text.



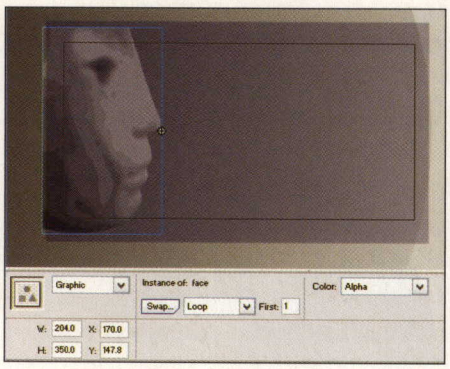
7 Adding colour

To create the varying colour effect, use the 'Rectangle' tool without a stroke on a new layer to create a shape that covers the entire canvas. Convert this into a graphic symbol and create and open another new movie clip layer to hold the effect.



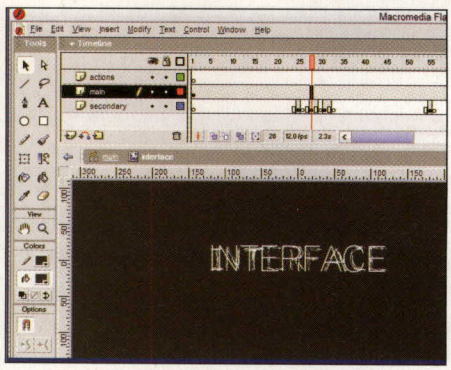
8 Colour adjustment

In your new movie clip, drag and centre the background shape. With your object selected choose the 'Advanced' options from the 'Colour' drop-down on the Property panel and click 'Settings'. Lower the Alpha balance to '30%' and adjust the colours.



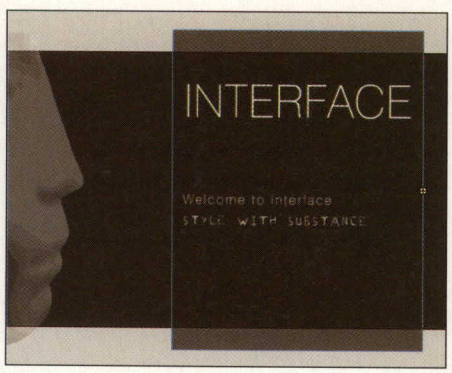
11 Importing images

Create a new layer between the circle and colour layers, and import the 'face.gif' file, placing this to the left. Convert to a graphic symbol and lower its opacity to '50%' by adjusting the Alpha colour settings on the Properties panel.



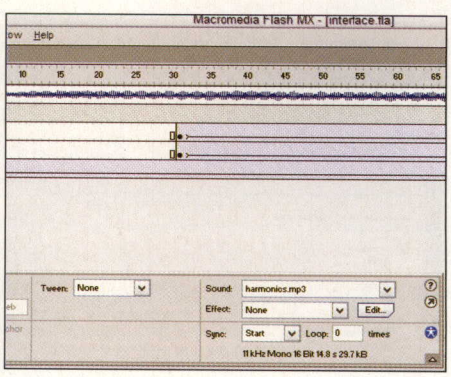
12 Name it

The 'Title' effect is another looping movie clip that contains a layer with a static title, another layer with the random grunge text flickering, and a third to contain the 'goto' and 'play frame 1' actionscript to create the loop.



15 Defining factors

After positioning the buttons, the background affects their legibility. To get round this we've created simple graphic symbols that are positioned behind the buttons to enhance their visual definition. We used the same symbol to make the body text clearer.



16 Ambient sound

To add background sound, import the 'harmonics.mp3' file. Create a new layer and drag the audio clip to the first frame. Set the 'Sync' option to 'Start' for the audio to play independently of the timeline and provide a continuous accompaniment.

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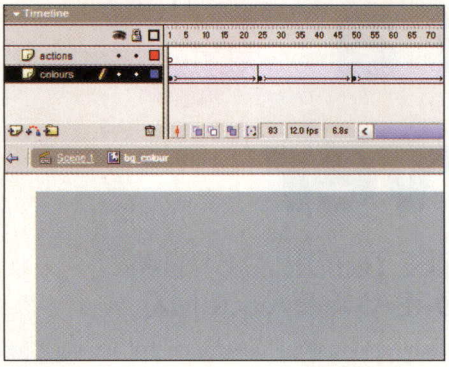
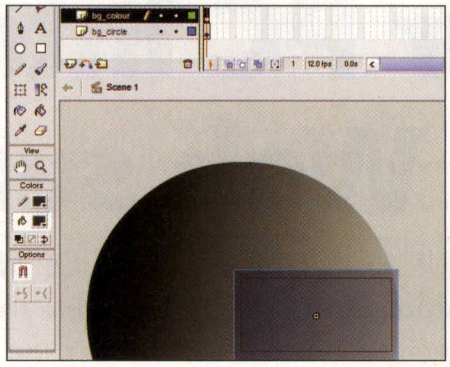


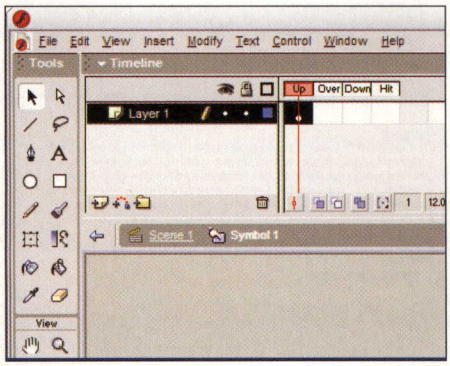
9 Like a chameleon

Extend the clip's timeline to 125 frames, adding keyframes every 25 frames. Change the colour for all keyframes except the first and last. Include motion tweens between each keyframe and add a 'goto' and 'play' action to return to frame 1.



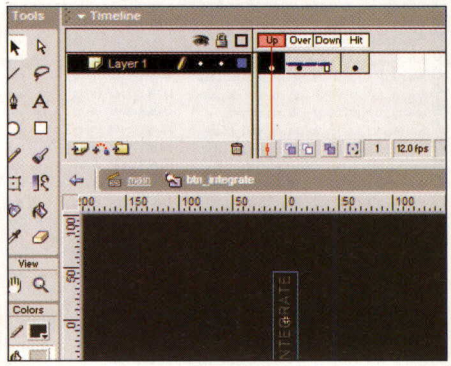
10 Final background

Return to your movie's main scene and add your new movie clip into its own layer above the circle already in place. Test your movie, and your background effect should be complete, with the colours influencing the tones generated by the circle.



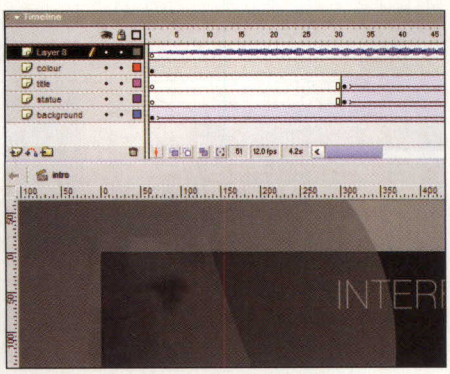
13 Creating buttons...

To create buttons, make new movie clips for each, making sure you specify the Button behaviour in each case. The text was entered into the first frame, and keyframes created and adjusted in subsequent frames.



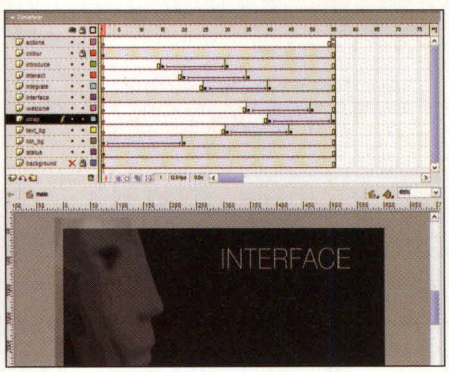
14 ...that beep

To add a sound to a button, import the 'button.wav' file into your movie and drag onto the canvas with the Over state selected. Although you can't see this on the stage, you will see its waveform represented in a Buttons symbol timeline.



17 Working backwards

With the basic interface in place it's often easier to create the intro sequence by duplicating the scene placing this at the beginning of your movie. You can then remove, resize and tween elements creating a natural transition to the interface.



18 Tweaking the timeline

You are now free to experiment with the way the final movie settles into place by adjusting alpha values, how objects motion tween into place and how your movie finally resolves. With the interface built all that's needed now is to add some content...

Jargon buster

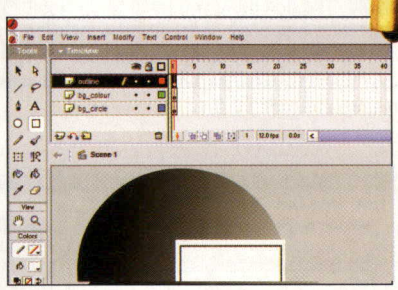
Alpha channel

This refers to the transparency value of a symbol – the lower the Alpha settings the more transparent an object becomes. This is used in our final movie to create common fade effects, as, for example, an initial symbol defined with an Alpha setting of 0% which tweens through to the final object at 100% will fade out of nothing into full opacity .

Button states

A Buttons symbol has four default states which represent the status of the symbol depending on surrounding events. For example the 'Up' state is the normal position, while 'Over' is displayed when the mouse is passed over the button, 'Down' logically is appearance when the button is clicked. The 'Hit' state is unique, as this allows you to determine an invisible region that will trigger the button in recognition of the mouse action.

Power users' tip



WHEN CREATING LARGE background effects as we have here, it can be all too easy to lose track of your movie canvas boundaries. To make your life easier you could choose to hide a given layer temporarily when working, by checking under the eye icon to the left of the timeline. If this creates its own problems, you might want to create a temporary layer on the top of your stack in which you can place an unfilled rectangle that matches your movie's boundaries. This way you'll be guaranteed to see where your limits lie all the time, and you can simply delete the layer when you've completed your work.

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In brief:
Task: Turn your PC into a Web server
Software I need: Dreamweaver MX, PHP, MySQL
Difficulty: Advanced
Time I need: Set aside at least an hour

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

Turn your PC into a dynamic Web server

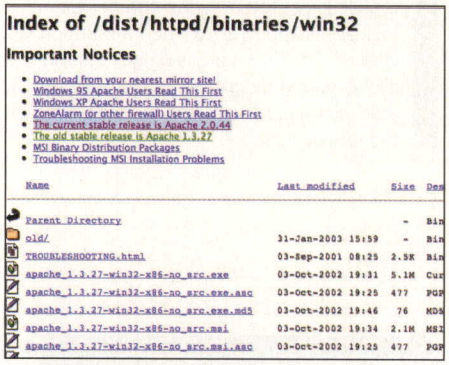
PART ONE

SET UP A WEB SERVER ON YOUR PC WITH THE FIRST OF THREE TUTORIALS THAT WILL HELP YOU CREATE DYNAMIC DATABASE CONTENT IN DREAMWEAVER MX

WELCOME TO A new series showing you how to bring dynamic Web content into Dreamweaver MX by connecting to a database. In this first tutorial you'll learn the basics of setting up a Web server to run on your home PC and install both PHP and MySQL, a scripting language and database respectively, that will help build the content. The good news is that all the software is free under the GNU General Public Licence. Your only cost will be downloading the software from the relevant sources online.

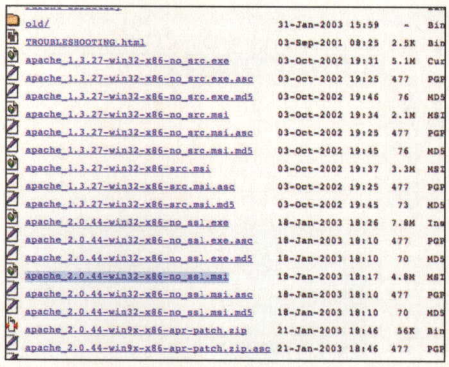
One question you might have is, why do I need this Web kit? The main reason is that anyone involved in building Web sites needs a place to test their work, especially when working with PHP and a database. If you have an older second PC, why not install the software on that, turning it into a fully-fledged Web server to serve your pages?

By the end of the series you'll have the skills to work with server scripting and databases – great assets for a Web developer. We've done the hard work; you just need to install everything as stated and change a few configuration files. Next month – how to create the database and set the site up.


Index of /dist/httpd/binaries/win32
Important Notices
Download from your nearest mirror site!
Windows 95 Apache Users Read This First
Windows XP Apache Users Read This First
ZoneAlarm (or other firewall) Users Read This First
The current stable release is Apache 2.0.44
The old stable release is Apache 1.3.27
MSI Binary Distribution Packages
Troubleshooting MSI Installation Problems
Name Last modified Size Des
Parent Directory - Bin
old/ 31-Jan-2003 15:59 - Bin
TROUBLESHOOTING.html 03-Sep-2001 08:25 2.5K Bin
apache_1.3.27-win32-x86-no_src.exe 03-Oct-2002 19:31 5.1M Cur
apache_1.3.27-win32-x86-no_src.exe.asc 03-Oct-2002 19:25 477 PGP
apache_1.3.27-win32-x86-no_src.exe.md5 03-Oct-2002 19:46 76 MD5
apache_1.3.27-win32-x86-no_src.msi 03-Oct-2002 19:34 2.1M MSI
apache_1.3.27-win32-x86-no_src.msi.asc 03-Oct-2002 19:25 477 PGP

1 PC setup

The first thing you need to do is get yourself a free copy of the Apache installer. This can be downloaded from **nagoya.apache.org/mirror/httpd/binaries/win32/**. The latest stable release is Apache 2.0.44.


old/ 31-Jan-2003 15:59 - Bin
TROUBLESHOOTING.html 03-Sep-2001 08:25 2.5K Bin
apache_1.3.27-win32-x86-no_src.exe 03-Oct-2002 19:31 5.1M Cur
apache_1.3.27-win32-x86-no_src.exe.asc 03-Oct-2002 19:25 477 PGP
apache_1.3.27-win32-x86-no_src.exe.md5 03-Oct-2002 19:46 76 MD5
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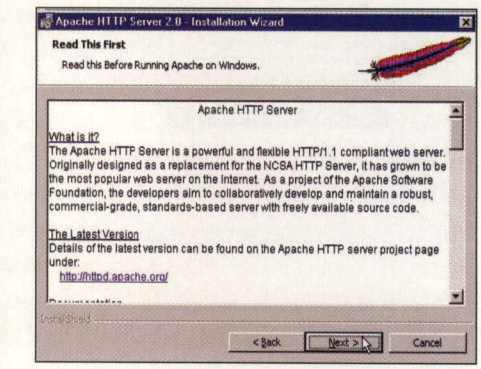
apache_1.3.27-win32-x86-no_src.msi.asc 03-Oct-2002 19:25 477 PGP
apache_1.3.27-win32-x86-no_src.msi.md5 03-Oct-2002 19:45 73 MD5
apache_1.3.27-win32-x86-src.msi 03-Oct-2002 19:37 3.3M MSI
apache_1.3.27-win32-x86-src.msi.asc 03-Oct-2002 19:25 477 PGP
apache_1.3.27-win32-x86-src.msi.md5 03-Oct-2002 19:45 73 MD5
apache_2.0.44-win32-x86-no_ssl.exe 18-Jan-2003 18:26 7.8M Ins
apache_2.0.44-win32-x86-no_ssl.exe.asc 18-Jan-2003 18:10 477 PGP
apache_2.0.44-win32-x86-no_ssl.exe.md5 18-Jan-2003 18:10 70 MD5
apache_2.0.44-win32-x86-no_ssl.msi 18-Jan-2003 18:17 4.8M MSI
apache_2.0.44-win32-x86-no_ssl.msi.asc 18-Jan-2003 18:10 477 PGP
apache_2.0.44-win32-x86-no_ssl.msi.md5 18-Jan-2003 18:10 70 MD5
apache_2.0.44-win9x-x86-apr-patch.zip 21-Jan-2003 18:46 56K Bin
apache_2.0.44-win9x-x86-apr-patch.zip.asc 21-Jan-2003 18:46 477 PGP

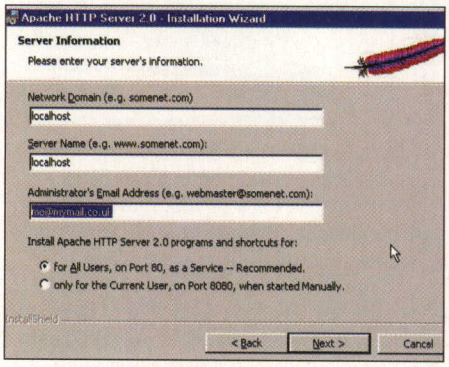
2 Download the package

Choose the right installer, which is **apache_2.0.44-win32-x86-no_ ssl.msi**. You'll also need a patch called **apache_2.0.44-win9x-x86-apr-patch.zip** from **httpd.apache.org/download.cgi**. Double-click the msi file to begin installation.


Apache HTTP Server 2.0 - Installation Wizard
Read This First
Read this Before Running Apache on Windows.
Apache HTTP Server
What is it?
The Apache HTTP Server is a powerful and flexible HTTP/1.1 compliant web server. Originally designed as a replacement for the NCSA HTTP Server, it has grown to be the most popular web server on the Internet. As a project of the Apache Software Foundation, the developers aim to collaboratively develop and maintain a robust, commercial-grade, standards-based server with freely available source code.
The Latest Version
Details of the latest version can be found on the Apache HTTP server project page under:
http://httpd.apache.org/
< Back
Next >
Cancel

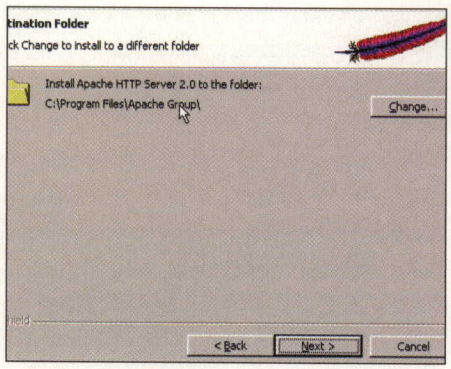
3 Installing Apache

Click 'Next' on the first dialog screen which gives details of the version number. At the second screen read the licence agreement, click the 'Accept' button and click 'Next'. The next page contains vital information, so it's a good idea to read this.


Apache HTTP Server 2.0 - Installation Wizard
Server Information
Please enter your server's information.
Network Domain (e.g. somenet.com)
localhost
Server Name (e.g. www.somenet.com):
localhost
Administrator's Email Address (e.g. webmaster@somenet.com):
me@mymail.co.uk
Install Apache HTTP Server 2.0 programs and shortcuts for:
for All Users, on Port 80, as a Service -- Recommended.
only for the Current User, on Port 8080, when started Manually.
InstallShield
< Back
Next >
Cancel

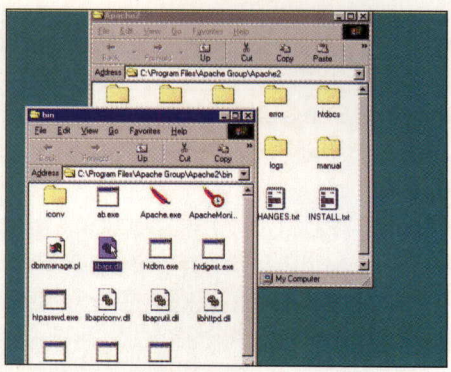
4 Server Information

In the Server Information dialog box, add 'localhost' for both Network Domain and Server Name. When it comes to Administrator's Email Address, add your own personal email address. Make sure 'Port 80' is clicked at the bottom.



5 More setup

In the Setup Type dialog box, the standard install is fine for our purposes. Click 'Next' and you'll be prompted on where you'd like to install the software. It's best to accept the default settings and click 'Next'. On the next screen press 'Install'.



6 After install

Click 'Finish' at the end of the installation. Now double-click the 'zip file' patch. In it will be a file called 'libapr.dll'. Replace the original Bin folder driver in the Apache program files folder with the new one you have downloaded from the patch file.

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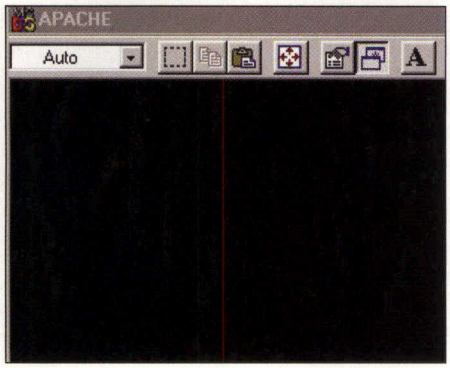
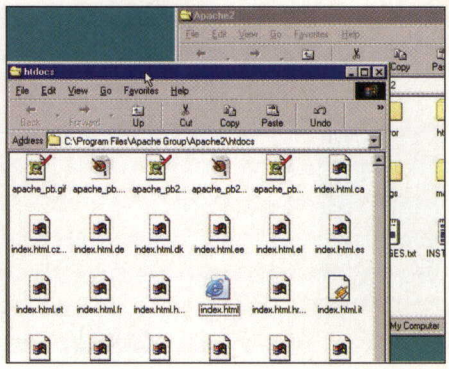


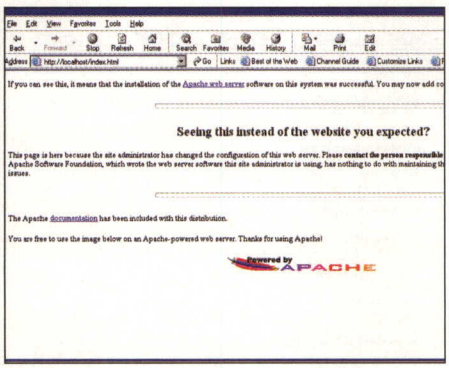
7 Connecting to the server

To start the Apache server click on 'Start', 'Programs', 'Apache HTTP Server', 'Start Apache in Console'. A DOS window will open called 'Apache' on the desktop. Minimise this window to the taskbar, but don't close it.



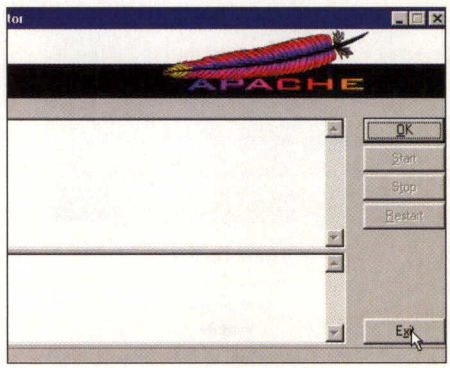
8 Storing Web pages

Open the 'Apache 2' folder to find another called 'htdocs', which you need to place your Web pages inside. You'll see a whole list of index pages in different languages. Rename the 'index.html.en' file to just 'index.html' – this is the English version.



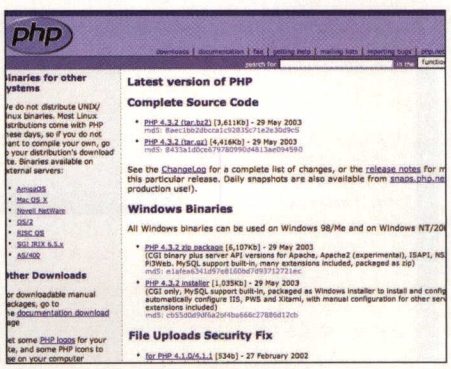
9 Open a Web browser

If you open a Web browser and type in **localhost/index.html** you should get the Apache Web page. You have successfully installed Apache on your computer. Remember to place any Web pages inside the 'htdocs' folder and delete the existing files.



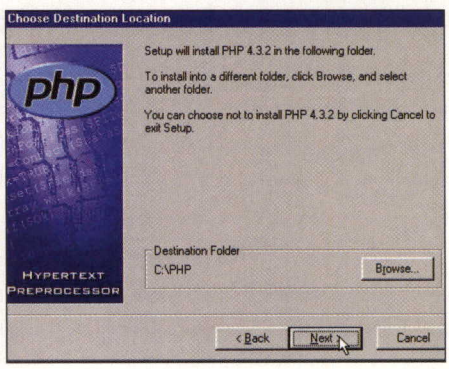
10 Stop the server

Close the 'Apache DOS' window to stop running the server and close the 'Apache Monitor' in your taskbar. We'll restart Apache again in a little while but for now we need to close it as we're going to install PHP to work with Apache.



11 Download PHP

You now need to go online and go to **www.php.net/downloads.php** – download the Windows Binary PHP 4.3.2 installer. You will be taken to a Mirror page, which allows you to select a regional download of the software.


Choose Destination Location
Setup will install PHP 4.3.2 in the following folder.
To install into a different folder, click Browse, and select another folder.
You can choose not to install PHP 4.3.2 by clicking Cancel to exit Setup.
Destination Folder
C:\PHP
Browse...
< Back
Next >
Cancel
HYPERTEXT PREPROCESSOR

12 Install PHP

Once downloaded, double-click on the 'Installer' icon and click 'Next' to move on. The installation we want is 'Standard', so click that option and click 'Next', then ensure that the destination folder is 'C:\PHP'.

Jargon buster

Web server

A Web server is software that serves the pages to people who log on to your PC. When you connect to a Web page, you're actually connecting to a computer that is permanently online with server software installed so it can serve the right page as the browser requests it. Unless you have a static IP address you won't be able to let people log on to your PC, as the address will continue to change.

Patch

The original installer of the Apache Web server had a corrupted file; the patch file is a download to replace it. Without downloading the patch, the software won't work and you cannot run Apache. The patch must be unzipped and the corresponding file replaced as detailed in step 6. It's a hassle but we can't really complain – after all the software is free.

httpd.conf

This file is the configuration file for the Apache server. It's necessary to change this manually after the install of PHP, just to let Apache know what to do with PHP files. By default Apache only knows what to do with standard HTML files, so by editing this text document we can tell Apache to open the PHP program, which will in turn process the PHP code and pass it back to Apache ready to be sent to the browser.

PHP

PHP stands for Hypertext Preprocessor which, although the name makes sense, makes you wonder why they mixed the initials up! It started out in 1999 as a personal server script to make updating Web pages easy – without the need for any of that FTP business – and has grown to become a full-on server-side scripting language. Fuelled by its open source birth, it is now installed on around nine million Web servers. PHP processes pages before they hit the browser and turns them into HTML, which makes viewing the source code impossible.

<?php phpinfo() ?>

This is PHP code to check the installation has worked. The <?php is the opening PHP tag to declare this is a PHP code block and is usually placed on a separate line in large blocks. The tag, ?>, at the end is the closing PHP tag to declare the end of the code and again is placed on a separate line in large blocks of code. So all that's left is the phpinfo() which requests info about PHP.

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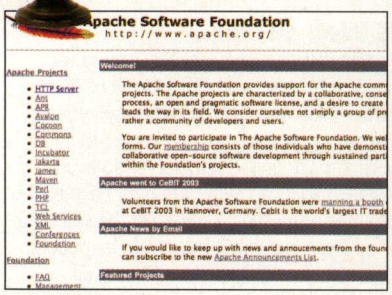
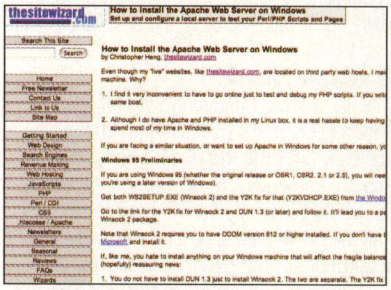
Web resources



Apache

www.apache.org

This is the place to download anything to do with Apache. Here you will find info on running Web services, scripts such as CGI/Perl and PHP. You can search the site for specific info and join the mailing list to be informed on important updates.



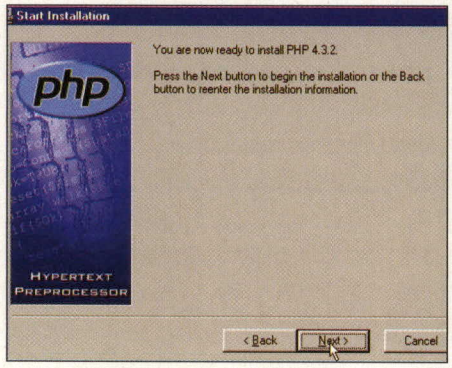
The Site Wizard

www.thesitewizard.com/archive/apache.shtml

This has useful info for setting up Apache, with lots of background knowledge, but some is a bit out of date. Also has info on how to set up PHP and MySQL.

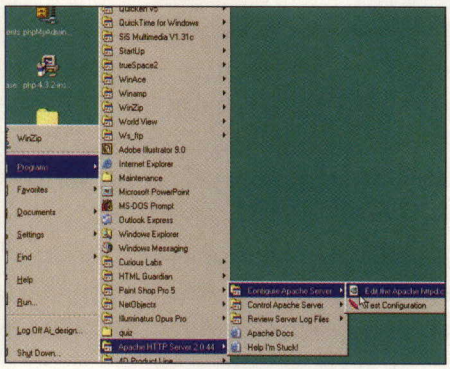
Power users' tip

After connecting to phpMyAdmin, you can have a little look around. The opening page lets you set up the users, including adding new ones and editing their permissions. To access this, click on the link at the bottom of the page for users. On the next page you'll see a list of the users on the computer. You'll notice there are two root users, one with a password as in the tutorial and one with % as a wildcard root user from another computer. This needs to have a password as well (even if it's the same) as it will protect your database. Click on the 'Edit' button, then enter a password in the appropriate boxes and hit the 'Go' button.


Start Installation
You are now ready to install PHP 4.3.2.
Press the Next button to begin the installation or the Back button to reenter the installation information.
php
HYPERTEXT PREPROCESSOR
< Back
Next >
Cancel

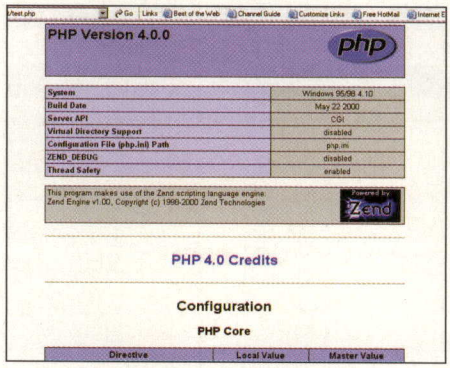
13 Further configuration

The next screen will ask you about mail configuration. This isn't too important for local Web page testing so leave the defaults and click 'Next'. The next screen is the server setup, so choose 'Apache' from the list, click 'Next', then 'Next' again to install.



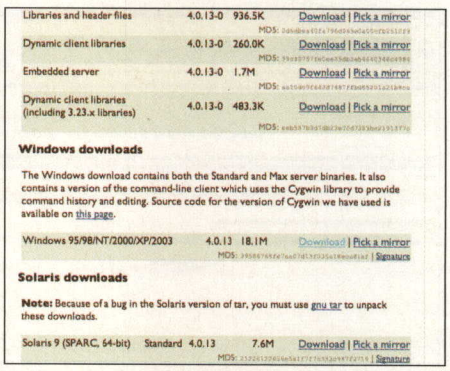
14 Configuring Apache

After setup you will get a message about not being able to configure Apache; this isn't a problem as we can do it manually. Go to 'Start', 'Programs', 'Apache HTTP Server', 'Configure Apache Server' and click 'Edit the Apache httpd.conf Configuration File'.



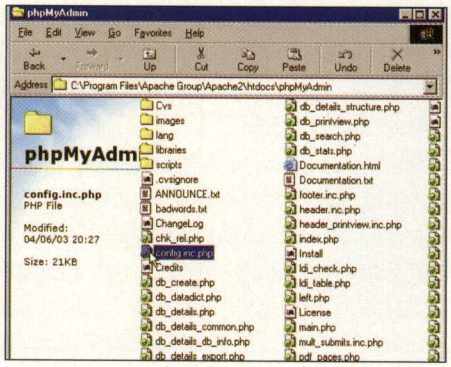
17 Test the code

Now Start Apache in 'Console' from the Start menu. Open your Web browser and type **http://localhost/test.php** as the URL. You have written your first server script, which was interpreted by the server and sent to your browser.


Libraries and header files 4.0.13-0 936.5K Download | Pick a mirror
Dynamic client libraries 4.0.13-0 260.0K Download | Pick a mirror
Embedded server 4.0.13-0 1.7M Download | Pick a mirror
Dynamic client libraries (including 3.23.x libraries) 4.0.13-0 483.3K Download | Pick a mirror
Windows downloads
The Windows download contains both the Standard and Max server binaries. It also contains a version of the command-line client which uses the Cygwin library to provide command history and editing. Source code for the version of Cygwin we have used is available on this page.
Windows 95/98/NT/2000/XP/2003 4.0.13 18.1M Download | Pick a mirror | Signature
Solaris downloads
Note: Because of a bug in the Solaris version of tar, you must use gnu tar to unpack these downloads.
Solaris 9 (SPARC, 64-bit) Standard 4.0.13 7.6M Download | Pick a mirror | Signature

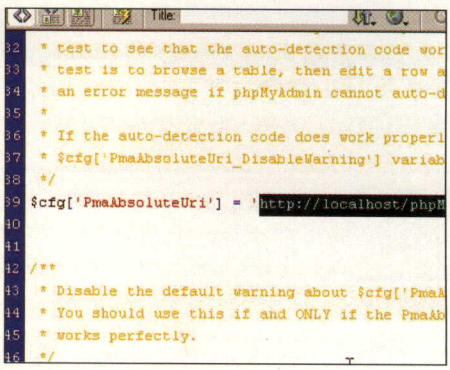
18 Download MySQL

Now point your browser to the MySQL site (**www.mysql.com/downloads/mysql-4.0.html**) and download the source file 'mysql-4.0.13-win.zip'. Unzip the files then open the folder you extracted the files to. Double-click on 'setup.exe' and install.



21 Configure phpMyAdmin

Once 'phpMyAdmin' is properly extracted move the folder into the 'htdocs' folder inside the Apache2 folder. Open the 'phpMyAdmin' folder and double-click the file 'config.inc.php' which will launch Dreamweaver, or you can edit the file in a text editor.


Title:
* test to see that the auto-detection code wor
* test is to browse a table, then edit a row a
* an error message if phpMyAdmin cannot auto-d
*
* If the auto-detection code does work properl
* $cfg['PmaAbsoluteUri_DisableWarning'] variab
*/
$cfg['PmaAbsoluteUri'] = 'http://localhost/phpM
/**
* Disable the default warning about $cfg['PmaA
* You should use this if and ONLY if the PmaAb
* works perfectly.
*/

22 Editing the config.inc.php

Once open in Dreamweaver MX, change to the 'Code' view and scroll to line 39. It's important to enter the words **http://localhost/phpMyAdmin/** as above, as this is where we placed our phpMyAdmin folder when accessing through the browser.

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Free, Unlimited Phone and Email Technical Support, 24/7/365


```
    Allow from all
</Directory>

#
# ScriptAlias: This controls which directorie
# ScriptAliases are essentially the same as A
# documents in the realname directory are tre
# run by the server when requested rather tha
# The same rules about trailing "/" apply to
# Alias.
#
ScriptAlias /cgi-bin/ "C:/Program Files/Apach

ScriptAlias /php/ "C:/php/"
AddType application/x-httpd-php .php
Action application/x-httpd-php "/php/php.exe"

#
```

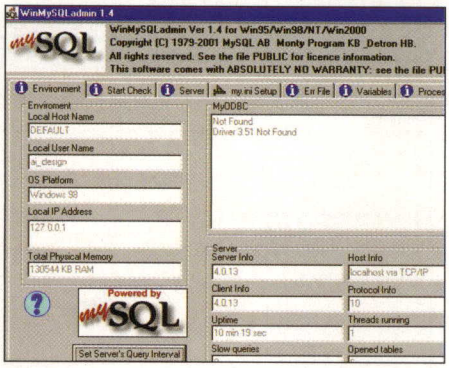
15 Edit the httpd.conf

We're going to tell Apache what to do with PHP files, so scroll down about halfway until you get to the line **ScriptAlias /cgi-bin/ "C:Program Files/Apache Group/Apache2/cgi-bin/"**. Under this type the three lines highlighted in yellow in the shot above.

```
<?php phpinfo() ?>
```

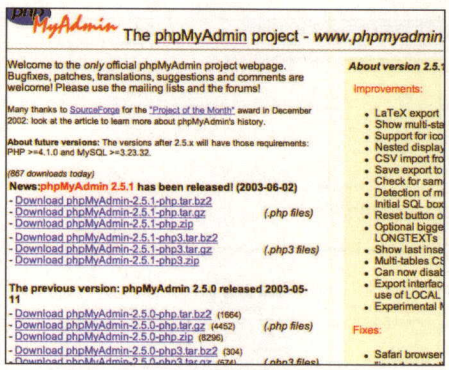
16 Test PHP is working

Open Notepad and type the line **<?php phpinfo() ?>** then save this as 'test.php' in the htdocs folder in Apache Group, Apache2, which is inside the Program Files folder. This line of code lists everything about the version of PHP which you've installed.



19 After installation

You'll see the Admin window pop up, then disappear to the taskbar. You may be prompted for a username and password; enter 'root' as the user and a password. You can change this any time in phpMyAdmin, an easy-to-use database front end.


The phpMyAdmin project - www.phpmyadmin
Welcome to the only official phpMyAdmin project webpage.
Bugfixes, patches, translations, suggestions and comments are welcome! Please use the mailing lists and the forums!
About version 2.5.1
Improvements:
Many thanks to SourceForge for the "Project of the Month" award in December 2002: look at the article to learn more about phpMyAdmin's history.
About future versions: The versions after 2.5.x will have those requirements: PHP >=4.1.0 and MySQL >=3.23.32.
(867 downloads today)
News:phpMyAdmin 2.5.1 has been released! (2003-06-02)
- Download phpMyAdmin-2.5.1-php.tar.bz2
- Download phpMyAdmin-2.5.1-php.tar.gz (.php files)
- Download phpMyAdmin-2.5.1-php.zip
- Download phpMyAdmin-2.5.1-php3.tar.bz2
- Download phpMyAdmin-2.5.1-php3.tar.gz (.php3 files)
- Download phpMyAdmin-2.5.1-php3.zip
The previous version: phpMyAdmin 2.5.0 released 2003-05-11
- Download phpMyAdmin-2.5.0-php.tar.bz2 (1664)
- Download phpMyAdmin-2.5.0-php.tar.gz (4452) (.php files)
- Download phpMyAdmin-2.5.0-php.zip (6296)
- Download phpMyAdmin-2.5.0-php3.tar.bz2 (304)
Fixes:
- Safari browser

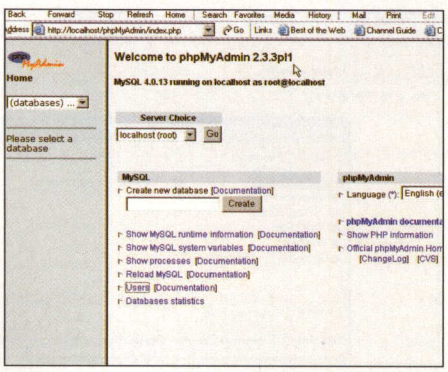
20 The final download

Go to **www.phpmyadmin.net** and download the latest version of phpMyAdmin. After you've downloaded the zip file to your PC, unzip and extract its contents. It's important to do this as there is a special directory structure.

```
// The $cfg['Servers'] array starts with $cfg['
// You can disable a server config entry by set
$i++;
$cfg['Servers'][$i]['host']          = 'localho
$cfg['Servers'][$i]['port']          = '';
$cfg['Servers'][$i]['socket']        = '';
$cfg['Servers'][$i]['connect_type']  = 'tcp';
$cfg['Servers'][$i]['controluser']   = '';

$cfg['Servers'][$i]['controlpass']   = '';

$cfg['Servers'][$i]['auth_type']     = 'config'
$cfg['Servers'][$i]['user']          = 'root';
$cfg['Servers'][$i]['password']      = 'passwor

$cfg['Servers'][$i]['only_db']       = '';
```

23 Nearly done

Scroll down to line 63 and enter 'localhost' as the server and 'root' as the user on line 72, and the password on line 73. Do this again, starting at line 102, and once again, starting at line 126. When you are done, save the file and open your Web browser.



24 Connect to phpMyAdmin

Type **http://localhost/phpMyAdmin/index.php** to access the database front end. Because you can see this page, you know MySQL is being accessed through the server. It's an idea to bookmark this site, as we'll create our database here in our next tutorial.

Jargon buster

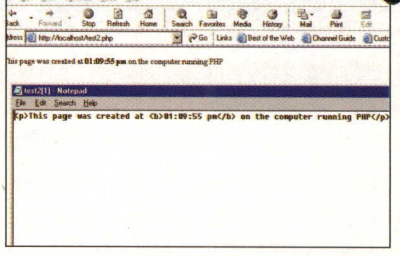
MySQL

MySQL is a fully-featured relational database tool that allows users to store information and then dynamically pull the information into Web pages giving unique content, depending on what the browser has requested. The database is made up of tables and each table will be made up of unique fields that will contain information. These fields can have a relationship with a field from another table, and this is the whole flexibility of relational databases.

phpMyAdmin

This little piece of software runs in a browser and is actually made up of stacks of PHP files. It has become so popular because it allows users to graphically create databases in a browser and populate them with content. This is much simpler than learning SQL commands and then adding all those commands by hand. It's probably not a good idea to leave this in the htdocs folder if you are opening your computer to other users, or else they will be able to trash your databases and that's not good!

Power users' tip



After installing PHP why not create a new PHP page in Dreamweaver MX or in a text editor and add this line: ** This page was created at <?php echo date("h:i:s a", time()); ?> on the computer running PHP. **. See that the PHP has inserted the time into the browser. Now go to the View menu and choose 'Source' – you will notice the PHP code has been turned into HTML!

In brief:
Task: Extend Dreamweaver with extensions
Software I need: Dreamweaver MX
Difficulty: Relatively simple
Time I need: Around one hour

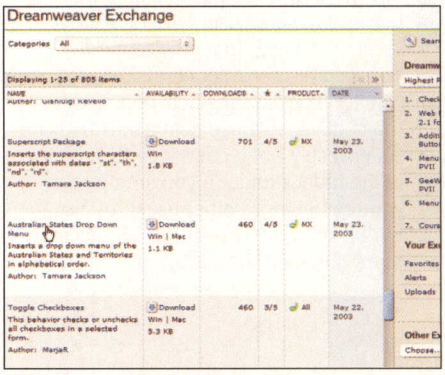
Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

Get to grips with Dreamweaver extensions

BROADEN YOUR WEB-AUTHORING HORIZONS BY LEARNING HOW TO DOWNLOAD AND USE MACROMEDIA'S HANDY DEVELOPMENT PLUG-INS

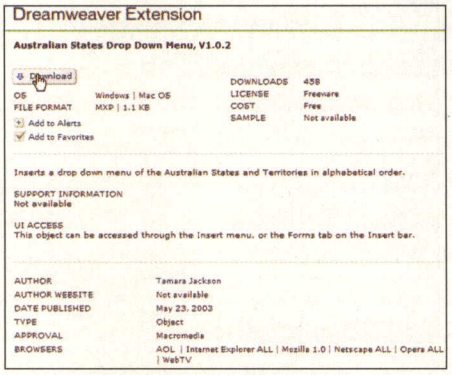
WEB DEVELOPMENT IS a funny business. Often it turns rational people into secretive beings, as designers become obsessed with keeping their flashy new solutions under wraps. However, this tends to eschew principles such as code re-use and resource sharing that would help everyone in the long run. Luckily Macromedia, with its sprawling collection of leading packages, has tried to encourage a more open community among its users. Dreamweaver MX lets Web authors create portable widgets called extensions, and distribute them over the Net. These can be downloaded and integrated into the Dreamweaver environment for use in new projects. The idea is to take the hassle out of embedding fiddly content for everyone – and this tutorial should give you a head start.

We first take you through the process of accessing the dedicated Macromedia Exchange site. Here you'll find all the extensions you need, plus facilities for submitting your own. We also tell you how to register in order to get downloading. Installation and maintenance are covered too, with Dreamweaver's handy manager, and we preview some examples of available extensions.



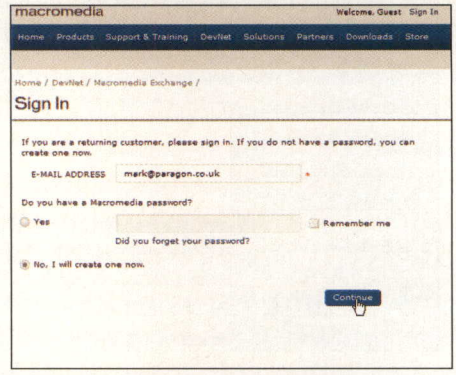
1 Exchange rate

Macromedia has a dedicated Exchange site for finding extensions. Categorised by product, we'll use the Dreamweaver MX page to find compatible downloads. Each extension is listed by its application; you need to click the link to learn more about each.


Dreamweaver Extension
Australian States Drop Down Menu, V1.0.2
Download
DOWNLOADS 458
LICENSE Freeware
COST Free
SAMPLE Not available
OS Windows | Mac OS
FILE FORMAT MXP | 1.1 KB
Add to Alerts
Add to Favorites
Inserts a drop down menu of the Australian States and Territories in alphabetical order.
SUPPORT INFORMATION
Not available
UI ACCESS
This object can be accessed through the Insert menu, or the Forms tab on the Insert bar.
AUTHOR Tamara Jackson
AUTHOR WEBSITE Not available
DATE PUBLISHED May 23, 2003
TYPE Object
APPROVAL Macromedia
BROWSERS AOL | Internet Explorer ALL | Mozilla 1.0 | Netscape ALL | Opera ALL | WebTV

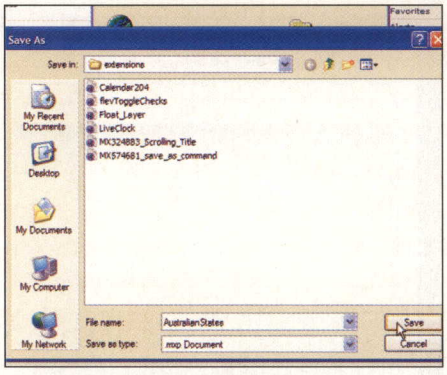
2 More information

By reading about each extension you'll get a better idea of what they do. You'll also find details of how they can be accessed and used in Dreamweaver, so make a note. Double check the package and browser support info, then click 'Download'.


macromedia
Welcome, Guest Sign In
Home Products Support & Training DevNet Solutions Partners Downloads Store
Home / DevNet / Macromedia Exchange /
Sign In
If you are a returning customer, please sign in. If you do not have a password, you can create one now.
E-MAIL ADDRESS merk@paragon.co.uk
Do you have a Macromedia password?
Yes
Remember me
Did you forget your password?
No, I will create one now.
Continue

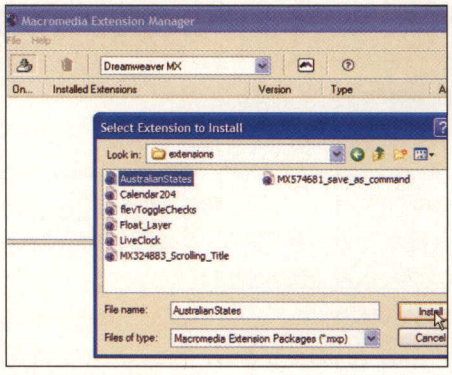
3 Register to download

If you're not already registered, you need to sign up with Macromedia before downloading. You'll have to provide a valid email address to gain access to forms asking for contact details and your new password. Fill these in to let downloading commence.



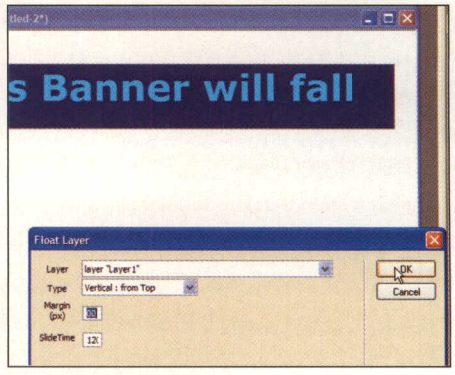
4 Download the file

The download prompt will ask you whether you wish to open or save the file. Click 'Save' and locate a suitable folder for storing your extensions. Again, click 'Save' to initiate the file transfer. You can repeat this for each extension you need.



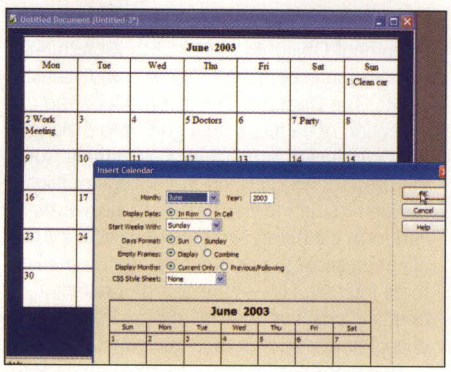
5 Install it

Dreamweaver features a Manager facility for installing and maintaining extensions. Select 'Manage Extensions' from the main Help menu and a dialog appears. Click 'Install New Extension' in the top left corner, locate the extension file and click 'Install'.



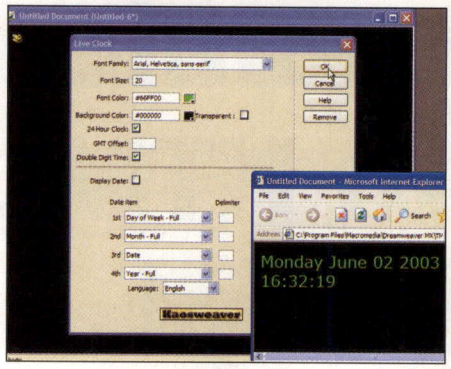
6 Float Layer

The Float Layer extension lets you create animated layers that move about the page. Draw a layer and add the 'Float Layer' option on the Page Behaviours panel, to add a scrolling banner. You can also define direction, speed and margin settings.



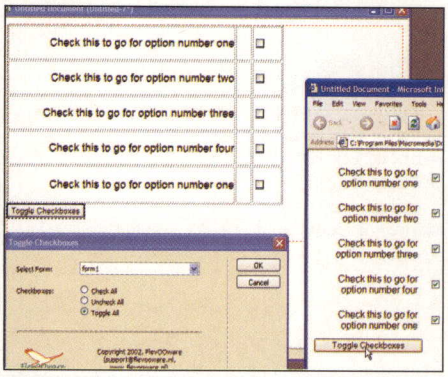
7 Calendar

With this extension you can rapidly generate monthly calendar tables to display important events. They are constructed from standard table cells and will represent day and date formats as specified. Text can be directly entered into the table as normal.



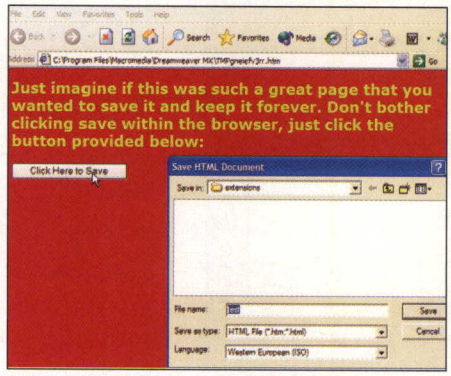
8 8. Live Clock

This extension enables you to add an animated digital clock to a page. Background and text colour can be set via the dialog, along with font styles and date formats. The clock will automatically update without you needing to touch any code.


Check this to go for option number one
Check this to go for option number two
Check this to go for option number three
Check this to go for option number four
Check this to go for option number one
Toggle Checkboxes

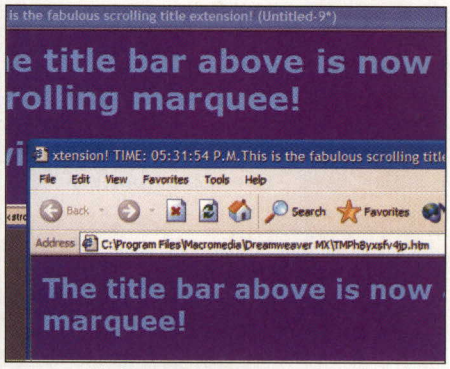
9 Checkbox toggle

When using forms within a page to accept data, it's often necessary to reset the items to default. This can be triggered by a number of actions, like the click of a Reset button. This extension will attach the behaviour to clear or 'toggle' checkbox selections.


Just imagine if this was such a great page that you wanted to save it and keep it forever. Don't bother clicking save within the browser, just click the button provided below:
Click Here to Save
Save HTML Document

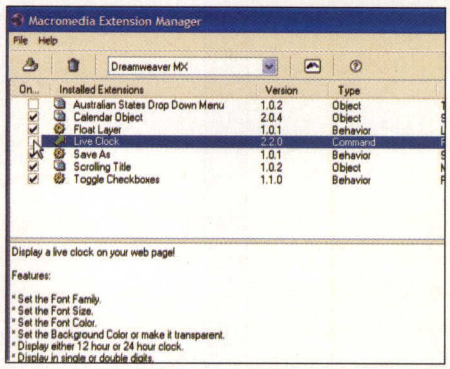
10 Save As

There are plenty of extensions on offer that mirror the functionality of the browser. Save As enables you to attach the commands to a button or link that will save a Web page to file. No coding is needed, bur a prompt will ask for a default filename.



11 Scrolling title

If you ever wanted your site to scroll its page titles within a browser, it can now. This extension is added like any other object, and will use the title defined in the Page Properties. Options for setting speed and adding a current time stamp are included.


Macromedia Extension Manager
File Help
Dreamweaver MX
Installed Extensions
Version
Type
Australian States Drop Down Menu 1.0.2 Object
Calendar Object 2.0.4 Object
Float Layer 1.0.1 Behavior
Live Clock 2.2.0 Command
Save As 1.0.1 Behavior
Scrolling Title 1.0.2 Object
Toggle Checkboxes 1.1.0 Behavior
Display a live clock on your web page!
Features:
* Set the Font Family.
* Set the Font Size.
* Set the Font Color.
* Set the Background Color or make it transparent.
* Display either 12 hour or 24 hour clock.
* Display in single or double digits.

12 Clear the boxes

You may find that your growing collection of downloaded and installed extensions clutters things up. Or, after using some of them, you may decide you don't need them. Remove them by opening the Extension Manager and clearing the checkboxes.

Web resources

Macromedia Exchange

www.macromedia.com/cfusion/exchange/

This is where it all happens really. Many of the products in the Macromedia family have their own exchange sites and all sections are clearly linked. The extensions are grouped by type of application and the Favourites feature is very useful.

Rabi's Extensions

www.dreamweaver-extensions.com

There are a whole host of unofficial sources on the Web for Dreamweaver extensions. Rabi's Extensions is an unofficial site that the developer has set up to distribute his own work. Many of the downloads are incorporated into the site, so you can get an idea of what's on offer.

Power users' tip

A simple but very useful tip is the use of extension bookmarks on the Exchange Web site. There are literally hundreds of available downloads listed, and categorised under numerous sections. Anyone who visits the site and intends to browse for many extensions at once will soon realise that it's very easy to lose track. Unless you decide to download potentially useful files straight away, the tendency is to group selections together. Luckily, Macromedia has recognised this and provided a Favourites list. On each Extension Details page there is a small tickbox to 'Add to Favourites'. Click this, and that page will be added to a stored Favourites section accessed via the main page. You can then go through each one and download at your leisure.

In brief:
Task: Create dynamic pages with DHTML and JavaScript
Software I need: A text editor and a browser
Difficulty: Advanced
Time I need: 30 minutes

Create dynamic pages with HTML and JavaScript

GET BACK TO BASICS WITH DYNAMIC HTML AND JAVASCRIPT AS WE EXPLORE THE INS AND OUTS OF THE DOCUMENT OBJECT MODEL

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

WHEN WE USE JavaScript to manipulate the Document Object Model (DOM), we're making use of what is commonly known as Dynamic HTML. The Document Object Model is the collection of elements that goes into making up a Web page, and includes everything from the browser window and the document itself, through to the individual paragraphs, words and form elements. We can use JavaScript to affect these elements one by one or to make them interact, allowing us to make rather dramatic changes such as moving images, changing text and morphing windows.

This month we're going to take you back to basics, and walk you through some of the most fundamental aspects of using JavaScript to mess with the DOM. In fact, we're going to use JavaScript and the DOM to produce a Web page from scratch, 'spawning' it in a new

```
<html>
<head><title>Create Window Script</title></head>
<body>
<script language=' JavaScript' >
function newWindow(f) {
    features = "width=" + f.window_width.value;
    features = features + ", height=" +
    f.window_width.value;
    features = features + ", scrollbars=" +
    f.scroll_bar.value;
    features = features + ", toolbar=" +
    f.tool_bar.value;
    features = features + ", menu_bar=" +
    f.menu_bar.value;
```

1 The script

Create a new text file, and call it create.html. This is the only page we're going to create. Enter the above HTML and code. Our JavaScript consists of a function called newWindow(), which will accept a form and extract the relevant information from it.

```
    newWin = window.open("", f.window_name.value,
    features);
    content = "<html><head><title>" +
    f.window_name.value + "</title></head>"
    content = content + "<body>" +
    f.content.value + "</body></html>"
    newWin.document.write(content);
    newWin.document.bgColor =
    f.background_color.value;
    newWin.document.fgColor = f.text_color.value;
    return false; }
</script>
```

2 Creating the window

The next part of the function opens the window, and then starts adding the content. We've put in a few extra HTML tags as well, just to make it into a proper Web page. Once we've written the content, we change the background and foreground colours.

```
  <td class=' hd' >Text Colour</td>
  <td>
      <select id=' text_color' >
          <option
value=' #000000' >Black</option>
          <option value=' #FFFFFF'
selected>White</option>
          <option
value=' #000099' >Blue</option>
          <option
value=' #990000' >Red</option>
          <option
value=' #009900' >Green</option>
      </select>
  </td>
</tr>
```

5 Text colour

The next **<select>** tag is for the text colour, and performs an almost identical task to the Background Colour **<select>** tags in step four. You should note, however, that there is a selected property specified in the White option here, and the Black option above.

```
<tr>
    <td class=' hd' >Window Width</td>
    <td><input type=' text'  id=' window_width'
  size=' 10' ></td>
  </tr>
  <tr>
    <td class=' hd' >Window Height</td>
    <td><input type=' text'  id=' window_height'
  size=' 10' ></td>
  </tr>
  <tr>
```

6 Width and height

The window width and window height form elements allow the user to specify exactly how large they want the window that will be spawned to be. If these are left blank, the window will be created at a default size, dependent on the browser you are using.

window, which we'll also be creating using JavaScript. This kind of dynamic content is the perfect example of how Dynamic HTML works.

The DOM is a collection of 'objects' and 'instances' of these objects (often called elements). This script uses the Window object to create a window instance, and then changes the content of that window instance using the methods of the Document object inside the Window object. This sounds confusing, and actually is a little bewildering at times. The best thing to do is go to a JavaScript reference Web site such as **www.devguru.com** to find out what objects do what in the DOM.

Since we're going to be allowing visitors to dictate what kind of content they want in the new window, we'll have to get that information from them. There are a limited number of ways we can actually do this, and one of the most tried and tested is the HTML form. To this end, most of our script is a simple HTML form.

One rather interesting feature our form uses is the onSubmit Event Handler. You may have noticed that our **<form>** tag doesn't include method or action properties. This is because all the processing is done using the onSubmit Event Handler, which calls a function and sends the form data to it. One thing you should know about the onSubmit Event Handler is that you can stop the form from submitting by returning a false Boolean variable.

While this script might not be of any practical use as it stands, the techniques demonstrated in it can be employed in any number of ways to produce useful and impressive effects. As usual, we encourage you to tinker around with the script, make it your own, and get to know how it works.

Jargon buster

Event Handler

Through Event Handlers, DHTML can react to a series of events – anything from the user moving the mouse or clicking part of the page, to the page itself loading or unloading. When an event occurs, the Event Handler triggers a particular piece of code.

Objects

Objects are part of Object Orientated Programming, a way of building programs intuitively. Programs are divided into a series of objects. Each plays its part in letting the program do what it wants, and can often be used repeatedly in different programs. JavaScript allows for limited OOP.

```
<body>
<form onSubmit=' return newWindow(this);' >
<table>
    <tr>
      <td class=' hd' >Window Name:</td>
      <td><input type=' text'  id=' window_name'
    size=' 20' ></td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
      <td class=' hd' >Text</td>
      <td><textarea id=' content'  rows=' 10'
    cols=' 40' ></textarea></td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
```

3 The form

We now declare the **<form>** tag. Note that there are no properties other than the Event Handler. The Event Handler returns newWindow(this). This is necessary, as the false Boolean variable that is returned will stop the form submitting itself.

```
      <td class=' hd' >Background Colour</td>
      <td>
            <select id=' background_color' >
                  <option value=' #000000'
    selected>Black</option>
                  <option
    value=' #FFFFFF' >White</option>
                  <option
    value=' #000099' >Blue</option>
                  <option
    value=' #990000' >Red</option>
                  <option
    value=' #009900' >Green</option>
            </select>
      </td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
```

4 Background colour

The **<select>** form tag allows the user to specify what kind of colour they want in the background. While we allow them to pick from the colours by name, we've entered the hexadecimal version in the Value property, so as to make things easier for our script.

```
      <td class=' hd' >Scroll bar</td>
      <td>
            <select id=' scroll_bar' >
                  <option
    value=' yes' >Yes</option>
                  <option value=' no' >No</option>
            </select>
      </td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
      <td class=' hd' >Menu bar</td>
      <td>
            <select id=' menu_bar' >
                  <option
    value=' yes' >Yes</option>
                  <option value=' no' >No</option>
            </select>
      </td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
      <td class=' hd' >Tool bar</td>
      <td>
            <select id=' tool_bar' >
                  <option
    value=' yes' >Yes</option>
                  <option value=' no' >No</option>
            </select>
      </td>
    </tr>
```

7 Behind bars

These three elements allow the user to specify certain other attributes about the window, including whether it should have scrollbars, a menu bar or a toolbar. The user will be able to enable or disable these as he or she sees fit.

```
    <tr>
      <td class=' hd' ><input type=' submit'
    value=' Create Window' ></td>
      <td></td>
    </tr>
</table>
</form>
</body>
</html>
```

8 Submitting

Finally, we finish our page. The last touch is the Submit button, which will trigger the onSubmit event in the form tags in step three. Save the file and open it up in the browser.

In brief:
Task: Create a message board with ASP
Software I need: A text editor and a browser
Difficulty: Advanced
Time I need: About 40 minutes

PART ONE

Give your site a message board with a little ASP

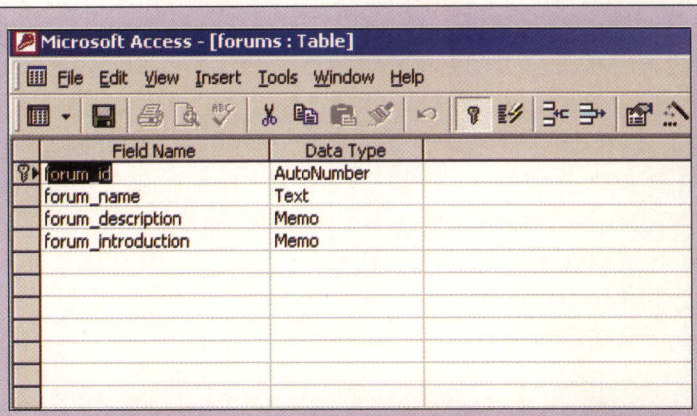
THIS MONTH WE START A SERIES OF TUTORIALS THAT WILL SHOW YOU HOW TO BUILD YOURSELF A MESSAGE BOARD WITH ASP AND GET YOUR USERS INTERACTING

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

THERE'S ONE THING that elevates a Web site from a simple information resource into a full-blown online community, and that is communication. If you allow your users to discuss their hobbies, ask for product recommendations and simply talk to each other, they'll return again and again.

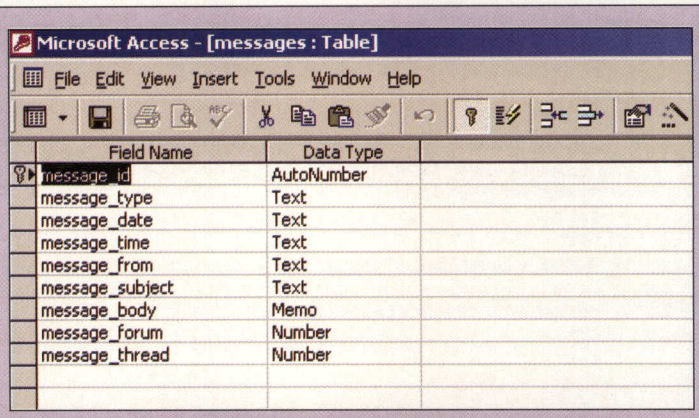
One of the most popular and simplest ways to create this kind of exchange is through a message board. There are plenty of message boards out there that you could use, but creating your own is an excellent way of learning some of the principles behind building a database-driven application.

Yes – you guessed it. Over the next three months we're going talk you through the nuts and bolts behind creating a message board. This month we'll busy ourselves with showing you through the preliminary stages



1 Create the database and Forums table

We need to create two tables. The first is called 'Forums'. Load up Access and create a new database. Select 'Create table in Design View'. You should create the following fields in the following formats: **forum_id (auto number** and **primary key), forum_name (text), forum_description (memo),** and **forum_introduction (memo).**



2 Creating the Messages table

Select 'Create table in Design View'. Create the following fields in the following formats: **message_id (auto number** and **primary key), message_type (text), message_date (text), message_time (text), message_from (text), message_subject (text), message_body (memo), message_forum (number), message_thread (number).** Create an ODBC system data source before continuing.

```
<html>
<head><title>Messageboard</title></head>
<link rel='stylesheet' type='text/css'
    href='css/global.css'>
<body>
<table class='tb' cellspacing='3'>
<tr>
<td colspan='3'>
<h1>EPOCH</h1>
<p>Welcome to the EPOCH message board. Please con-
    sult our
<a href='http://www.epochgame.com/faq'>FAQ</a> for
instructions on posting and forum etiquette.</p>
</td>
</tr>
```

5 Greet the user

Once we've opened the databases, we enter the usual HTML. We use the <link> tag to get the style sheet we created in step three, and then output a message, greeting the user to the site and directing him or her to an FAQ in case they need instructions on using the message board.

```
<tr>
<td><b>Forum</b></td>
<td id='center'><b>Threads</b></td>
<td id='center'><b>Last Post</b></td>
</tr>
<%
    Do While NOT rsF.EOF
    Response.Write("<tr class='tx'><td class='bor-
    der'>")
    Response.Write("<div><a href='view_forum.asp?id="
& rsF("forum_id") & "'>" & UCase(rsF("forum_name"))
& "</a>")
    Response.Write("<div>" & rsF("forum_description")
& "</div>")
    rsM.Open "SELECT message_id, message_from, mes-
    sage_date"
& "FROM messages WHERE message_forum = "
& rsF("forum_id") & " ORDER BY message_date,"
& "message_time DESC "
```

6 Output information

Now it's time to start outputting information on each forum in the rsF record set. We do this using the 'Do While' loop, moving through each record and outputting **forum_name** and **forum_description.** We then open rsM, using a MySQL filter to find any messages that are inside the current forum.

of preparing the database, creating the style sheet and putting together the first page of your message board. Next month, we'll be creating the pages that enable users to view the forums and messages within the message board, as well as the beginnings of the scripts allowing users to post their messages. In the third month, we'll polish off the message board by helping you create those pages that will let a user review, change and delete their previous messages, as well as giving you some useful tips on validating posts so as to cause the minimum of fuss.

System data source

Before you can begin to code the message board (and after you've created the database), you need to create a system data source, referencing the database we'll be using to contain details about the messages and the forums. Consult your Web host as to how you can do this. If you're using Windows 2000, you can create a system data source through the ODBC Data Source Administrator. This can be found in the Control Panel under Administrative Tools.

Open it up, go to the 'System DSN' tag, and click 'Add'. You'll now be given a choice of database drivers to choose from. We'll be using an Access database, so select the relevant option and click 'Finish'. In the next window, type in a reference name or code for your database in the 'Data Source Name' field. Remember this name, as we'll be using it in the script. Now click 'Select' and find the database. Click 'OK', then click it again in the next window – and your system data source has been created!

Jargon buster

ODBC

Stands for Open Database Connectivity, an application programming interface. It acts as the interface between an app and a database (or other data type), which lets scripting languages like ASP access databases like Access. You can access databases without ODBC, but it requires you talking in the database's language. ODBC makes it easier, as it translates requests for you.

Record set

The most common way to access a database via a Web page is sending a request to the page and receiving a record set in return. This is all the data the request receives, and includes all the records from the database you asked for.

```
body { color:#ffffff; font-family:sans-serif; }
a { color:#ffffff; }
a:hover       { color:#6699ff; text-
    decoration:none; }
.tb { width:600px; }
.tx { font-family:sans-serif; padding-bottom:8pt; }
td { font-family:sans-serif; }
#button { width:100; border:1pt solid #bbbbdd; }
.right { text-align:right; }
```

3 Style sheet

We're going to create a quick style sheet that we'll be using throughout the message board script. This will make it easier for the user to see what to do and how to do it. Enter the above and save it as 'global.css' in a **css** folder off the main Web site folder.

```
<%
    Set Con = Server.CreateObject("ADODB.Connection")
    Con.Open "messageboardDB"

    Set rsF = Server.CreateObject("ADODB.RecordSet")
    rsF.ActiveConnection = Con
    rsM.CursorType = 2
    rsM.LockType = 3

    rsF.Open "SELECT * FROM forums"
    Set rsM = Server.CreateObject("ADODB.RecordSet")
    rsM.CursorType = 2
    rsM.LockType = 3
    rsM.ActiveConnection = Con
%>
```

4 New text document

Create a new text document and save it as 'default.asp'. The first thing we do on the site is open a connection to the database and a couple of record sets to access the forums and message tables. We set the cursor types to 'Dynamic' and the lock types to 'Optimistic'.

```
    If rsM.EOF Then
      Response.Write("</td><td class='border'
    id='center'>None</td>")
      Response.Write("<td class='border' id='cen-
    ter'>None</td></tr>")
    Else
      message_from = UCase(rsM("message_from"))
      message_date = rsM("message_date")
      count = 0
      Do While NOT rsM.EOF
              count = count + 1
              rsM.MoveNext
      Loop
      Response.Write("</td><td class='border'
    id='center'>")
      Response.Write(count)
      Response.Write("</td><td class='border'
    id='center'>")
      Response.Write(message_from & "<br>" & mes-
    sage_date)
      Response.Write("</td></tr>")
    End If
```

7 Display the stats

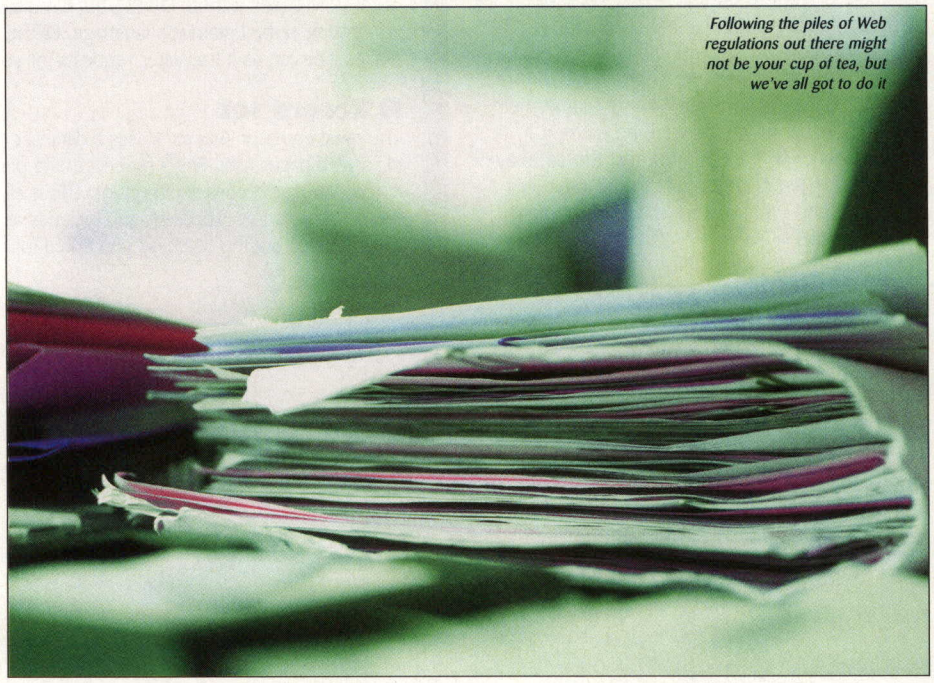
This code allows us to display some statistics concerning the forum, including how many messages have been posted in it, and who posted the last message. We use the Messages record set to find out all this information and output it into the table.

```
  rsM.Close
  rsF.MoveNext
  Loop
  rsF.Close
  Con.Close
  Set rsF = Nothing
  Set rsM = Nothing
  Set Con = Nothing
  %>
  </table></body></html>
```

8 Loop the loop

Last but not least, we move our loop forward, remembering to use the 'MoveNext' function in the record set object to move us on to the next record. If the loop is finished, we close everything up, tidy the objects and close any HTML tags that are still open.

JAMES SEABRIGHT ANSWERS YOUR WEB SITE BUILDING QUERIES. EMAIL HIM AT **HELPDESK@PARAGON.CO.UK**



Following the piles of Web regulations out there might not be your cup of tea, but we've all got to do it

Why stick to standards?

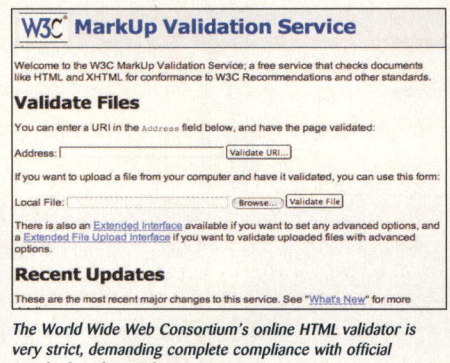
Q I read in a recent issue of your magazine that it's important to make sure my Web pages meet official HTML standards. As recommended I went along to the online validation system at **validator.w3.org**, and was surprised to find that a lot of the markup which had been generated by my Web-building package showed up as incorrect HTML. Bemused by this result, I ran some well-known sites through the system, and found that almost all of them also failed to validate. So, if the likes of BBC News and Google don't bother about writing pages that meet the official standards, why should this be a concern of mine?

Martin Haynes

A **It's true that many sites deliberately flaunt official Web standards, mainly on purpose rather than accidentally. The problem with sticking to the letter of the official standard is that you're likely to fall foul of Web browsers which don't properly support these standards. Even the most popular browsers such as Internet Explorer and Mozilla have been slow to properly match up to Web standards such as CSS2 which have been in place for some years.**

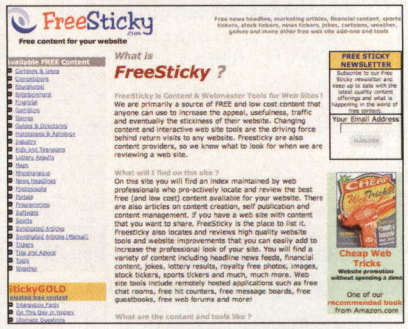
This means that if you want to guarantee a particular design feature will work in a wide range of browsers, you sometimes have to use 'deprecated' code or double that up with the proper way of doing things. If a way of coding has been deprecated, that means it is no longer part of the official standard, as it has been superseded by some other way of coding for the desired effect. One commonplace example is the BODY tag, which used to be the place where you'd specify the colour scheme for a page. Now that should be done in a stylesheet instead, but you'll still come across many pages coding in the tag, because it still works with most browsers.

Big sites like the ones you mention tend to prioritise the bad behaviour of the most popular browsers over meeting official standards. This makes sense for two reasons: they want their designs to look right for the majority of their visitors, and they regularly update the site and can account for changes in browser behaviour. The majority of sites created by *Practical Internet* readers cannot justify flaunting standards for these reasons. It is especially important to stick to standards if you're making a site which may not be updated or majorly overhauled for some time, because that's your only way of guaranteeing that it will continue to work in the long term.


W3C MarkUp Validation Service
Welcome to the W3C MarkUp Validation Service; a free service that checks documents like HTML and XHTML for conformance to W3C Recommendations and other standards.
Validate Files
You can enter a URI in the Address field below, and have the page validated:
Address:
Validate URI...
If you want to upload a file from your computer and have it validated, you can use this form:
Local File:
Browse...
Validate File
There is also an Extended Interface available if you want to set any advanced options, and a Extended File Upload Interface if you want to validate uploaded files with advanced options.
Recent Updates
These are the most recent major changes to this service. See "What's New" for more

The World Wide Web Consortium's online HTML validator is very strict, demanding complete compliance with official standards to keep it happy

Reader's tip



Stuck on sticky content

I'm always looking for new ways to jazz up my Web site with useful features, and one of the best ways I've found of doing this is to use free external content. Lots of people are familiar with the idea that you can get free news headlines on your site, but fewer realise about the extent of other content that's there for the taking – I've recently added some love tips published by a Web site in Paris, for example, as a bit of a joke on the page of my site about my recent trip to the city of love. I came across these love tips – and quite a few other bits of great content – at an excellent directory of content, **www.freesticky.com**. The site's title refers to 'sticky content' which is the weird Americanism given to site elements which encourage people to stay on a Web site or visit again soon. Thought this might be useful for other readers looking to go that extra mile with their Web creations.

Chloe Blanchett

DIY online games

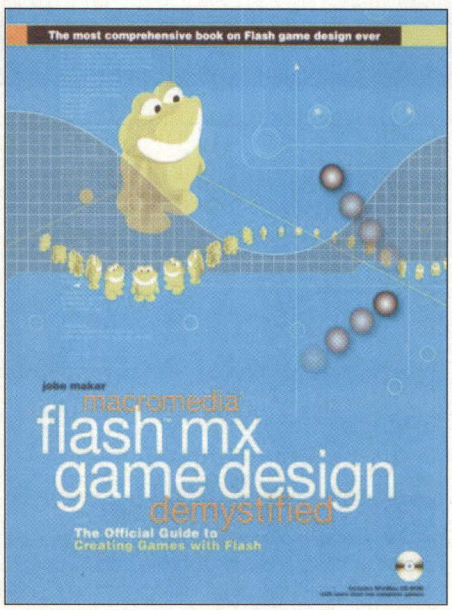
Q After playing a good online game I was hoping you could point me in the direction of an online guide to making one myself. I would like to make something like the games at **www.star-fury.com** or those listed on **www.mpogd.com**. I know they are very advanced with cookies, PHP and so on, but I have lots of time so I'm not afraid of how complicated it is. I have Macromedia Studio MX and a good knowledge of Web design. Hope you can help.

Philip Wincanton

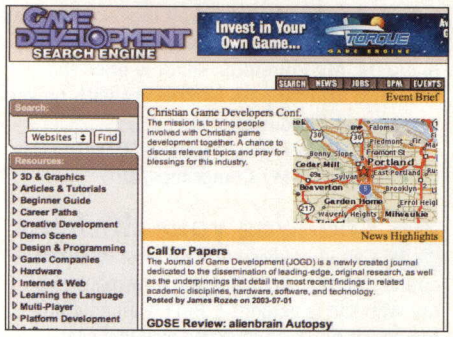
A **It's good that you say you've plenty of time to master these techniques, because you'll certainly be needing it! Developing online games is a very specialist area which is not really covered by the standard documentation for packages like Macromedia Studio MX, even though they do have the features you need to create games.**

There are various online resources where you could get free advice on how best to develop games for the Web, and there's even a useful Game Development Search Engine at www.game-developer.com which will help you wade through the various different sites to find information relevant to your needs.

If you really want to get to grips with game development, a better way forward would be to invest in a book that will guide you through the learning curve. Jobe Makar's '*Macromedia Flash MX Game Design Demystified*' is billed as the official guide to creating such applications with the software you have. It can be ordered from any good book shop (ISBN 0201770210).



Jobe Makar's book on Flash MX game design costs around £30 but is an invaluable guide to the subject



*Wade through the masses of online resources about game development using the search engine at **www.game-developer.com***

Luscious lines

Q I use quite a lot of horizontal rule (HR) tags to separate sections of my Web pages, but am very bored by the standard grey line that is the default version of that tag. I have played around with changing its colour, width and size, but was wondering whether there's anything more adventurous that would be possible with other style sheet trickery?

Gina Kendrick

A **You're right that the horizontal rule tag itself is quite limited in potential as far as jazzing it up is concerned. The best way to make your HR tags look more interesting is to use the border features of CSS, which are much more flexible and allow you to play with different types of edges (eg dotted lines or grooves) as well as altering colours. This is a slightly unorthodox use of the border features of CSS, and as a result can be quite fiddly, especially if you have lots of HR tags on your page. The example shown here will create a red and blue line with a dashed edging.**

```
<html><head>
<style type="text/css">
hr                  { width:90%;
  color:blue;
  }
.holder { border:1px dashed blue;
                    background-color:red;
                    width:70%;
                    text-align:center;
  margin: auto;
  }
</style>
</head><body>
<div class="holder"><hr></div>
</body></html>
```

Using this basic template, it is easy to try out different permutations by changing the colour and border style settings. White space around the edge of the line can be created by adding a size to the 'margin' line, eg 2px. →

Readers' sites

Share your site with us – send the URL to **helpdesk@paragon.co.uk**

TO CELEBRATE THE SUMMER FESTIVAL SEASON WE'RE FEATURING THE HOME PAGES OF THREE PERFORMERS WHO CAN BE SEEN AT THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL

Natalie Haynes

URL: www.nataliehaynes.com

The wonderful midnight blue background colour and stark white type make this stand-up comedian's site look very glamorous. A cunning use of stars as bullet points fits nicely with this being a site for a show business personality, and all the information you need is readily available.

Monique

URL: www.monique.co.uk

The most extensive of the sites featured this issue, if not the most visually arresting – the choice of background colour is not ideal. Still, this is more than made up for by the excellent use of multimedia to provide downloadable samples of this talented French cabaret artist's work.

Paul Foot

URL: www.paulfootcomedy.com

Although quite a basic site, this comedian's home page has done well to choose a background colour which matches the one in his portrait on the site. So many sites forget to provide details of when they were last updated and it's refreshing to see this clearly noted here.

You can achieve a subtler effect by placing all the styling in the 'holder' class into the main 'hr' style and then removing the DIV tag. That will also eliminate the need to go back and add DIV tags around all the HRs already on your pages.

Linking locally

Q My Web site contains some tutorials on how to make better use of your computer and I was wondering whether it's possible to make the 'My Computer' or any other window open as the result of clicking on a link in a Web page. I guess this has security implications which may be why my attempts to date have failed!

Mathieu Avary

A **It is possible to create links to local items on a site visitor's computer but this is something of a triple gamble. Firstly you are presuming that anyone who clicks on the link will be running Windows, which is not necessarily the case. Secondly you rely on their hard disk having the same letter and layout as the 'standard', which will not be the case if they have the multiple users' facility active or are using a different version of Windows. And thirdly you're relying on them using a browser which behaves the same way as Internet Explorer. Considering the subject matter of your Web page, it is fairly safe to assume people will be using the same Windows version, but you may want to add a note warning them that the links won't work if their hard disk layout is non-standard.**

Now that I've explained all the reasons why this won't work, here's the code you need to make the My Computer window open in Windows 98 (the path is different with newer versions of Windows):

My Computer

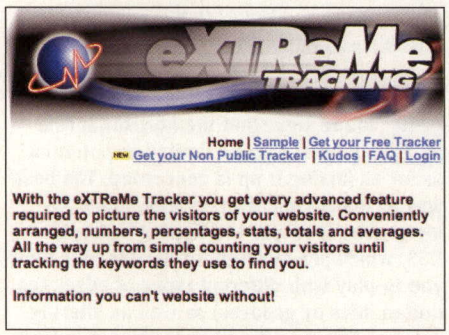
Counting your chickens

Q Can you advise on how best to install a counter on my site telling me how many hits my Web site is getting? I don't want anything too garish or which involves plaguing site visitors with advertising.

Sharon Morgan

A **There are hundreds of ways that you can install a free Web site counter. You can survey most of them by searching for 'Web counters' at www.dmoz.org. Personally I'm not a big fan of counters that publicly reveal the number of visitors you've had at a site – I've never been sure why that information would be of any interest to most site visitors. However, thousands of sites have decided that they want such a counter, and if you want to join them I would recommend www.surferstats.com as a good service that will also provide you with detailed statistical breakdowns of your visitors' profiles.**

However, I think that the best solution is that offered by www.extreme-dm.com, who provide the most detailed statistics I've seen at any free counter site. The code they provide you with displays a small logo on your site, which pops up a new window with the visitor report when clicked. All the statistics are publicly accessible; you have to pay to get a non-public counter.


eXTReMe TRACKING
Home | Sample | Get your Free Tracker
NEW Get your Non Public Tracker | Kudos | FAQ | Login
With the eXTReMe Tracker you get every advanced feature required to picture the visitors of your website. Conveniently arranged, numbers, percentages, stats, totals and averages. All the way up from simple counting your visitors until tracking the keywords they use to find you.
Information you can't website without!

Free detailed visitor reporting is available courtesy of the lovely people at www.extreme-dm.com.

Sharp shooter

Q I've got a table of information that needs to appear on my Web site, which I created in Excel. I think it is too complicated to convert into an HTML-based table and so have been trying to convert it into a graphic instead. I've done this by taking a screenshot of the table in Excel and then converting that into a JPEG in Paint Shop Pro. But the JPEG always seems to end up with strange blurry edges on the text. While this can be reduced by taking the quality level of the JPEG to the maximum setting, that also creates a huge file. Is there no way I can get the table to show as a smooth, small graphic?

Valerie Farr

A **JPEG is not the best graphic format to use for showing text and chart type information. It was created with photographic**

Rise of the robots

Q I read about some sort of hidden file that I should include on my Web site so it gets looked at by search engines. What is this all about and how can I add one to my site?

Kathryn Clark

A **This sounds like the robots.txt file, which is used by some search engines to find out what parts of a site the Webmaster is happy for them to index. Mostly, if you don't have one, your site won't suffer. The lack of a robots.txt file is usually interpreted as the Webmaster not minding if engines scour the entire site. It's not a way of getting your site seen by a search engine, as it must have found your site before it can start having an effect.**

The main purpose of robots.txt is to restrict access to parts of your site. The steps here show how to set up a robots.txt file and provide a few resource references to help you find out more.

```
User-agent: *
Disallow:
```

1 Being permissive with robots

The text above creates a robots.txt file to let search engines access all parts of a site. Most engines presume this is the case, but some need a robots.txt file to index the site. Place it in the root directory of your domain, eg **www.mysite.com/robots.txt**.

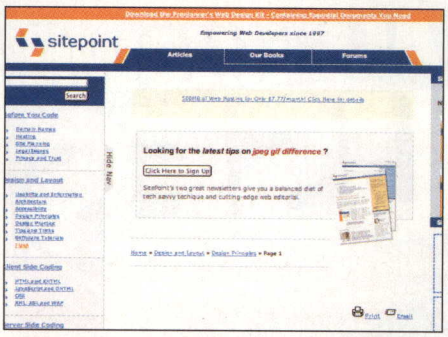
```
User-agent: *
Disallow: /
```

2 Keeping robots out

This kind of robots.txt file will stop any search engine which respects this standard from indexing any part of a site. You can specify directories to avoid by changing the Disallow line to eg, 'Disallow: /images'; you can add more Disallow lines if needed.

type images in mind, and the type of compression it uses works by removing information from the image that is difficult for the human eye to distinguish. A more suitable format for the sort of chart you have is GIF. Rather than removing information from the image, it compresses the graphical data using the powerful LZW method. If your chart doesn't use many colours, GIF will be especially efficient, as it can handle colour tables containing anything from 2 to 256 colours.

Taking a screenshot and converting that graphic is not the most efficient way of exporting Excel data graphically, especially if your chart is too big to display at full size in one screenshot. Recent versions of Excel are clever enough to convert cells into graphics when you copy them into the clipboard and then switch to Paint Shop Pro. Open its Edit menu and select 'Paste As New Image'. A new document of the correct size will be created and the cells placed into it as a graphic. If this doesn't work with your system, the screenshot method is still the best way to do it.



You can read more about the differences between different graphic formats at ***www.sitepoints.com/article/44***

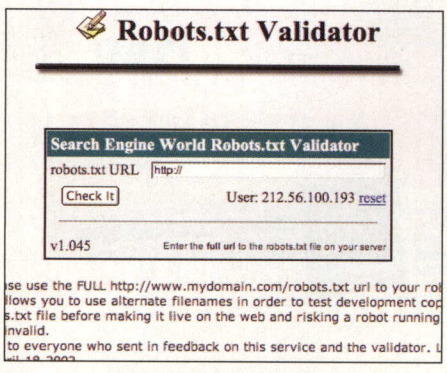
The typographer's dream

Q My Web site looks so dull using standard fonts. How can I use other typefaces? I've heard about embedding fonts but am not sure how to do it. Also, is it a good thing to do and does it slow down the loading of the site?

Kiki Greene

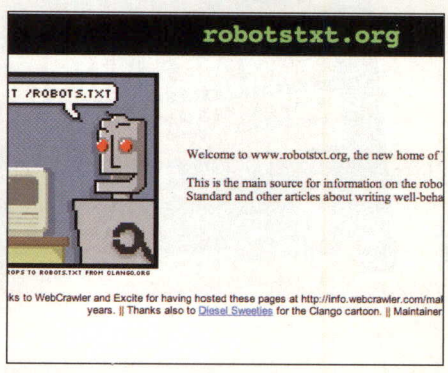
A **Embedding fonts in your site is a good way to give your design a unique look, and can be achieved without a great deal of hassle using free software tools. For the uninitiated, font embedding lets site viewers download fonts used on a Web page if they don't have them installed on their machine. It increases the time taken to download a page, so it makes sense only to embed fonts that are used widely on your site. If you're using a special font on just one or two pages, it will probably be quicker to convert the text into a GIF graphic instead of using font embedding.**

Microsoft's free WEFT software is the best way to do this, and you can download the latest version from www.microsoft.com/typography/free.htm. There is more than one technical standard for embedding fonts, but as Microsoft's Internet Explorer is by far the most popular browser, this method will work best for most users. Bear in mind that not all users will be able to handle font embedding – so make sure your site still works without it.



3 Checking your robots.txt

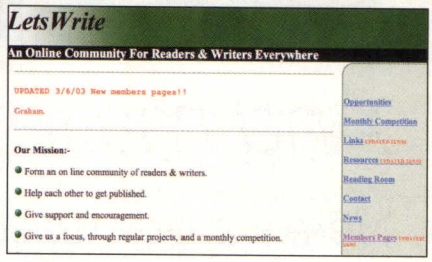
Once you've created and uploaded your robots.txt file, check it works properly by running it through the free online validator at **www.searchengineworld.com/cgi-bin/robotcheck.cgi**. This ensures it won't confuse engines with wrong syntax.


robotstxt.org
/ROBOTS.TXT
Welcome to www.robotstxt.org, the new home of
This is the main source for information on the robo
Standard and other articles about writing well-beha

4 Finding out more

There's a lot more to learn about advanced applications of the robots.txt file; including which search engines pay attention to it and how it's used by big sites to control the way their pages are indexed. Head for **www.robotstxt.org**.

Design doctor



LetsWrite

URL: www33.brinkster.com/letswrite
Creator: Graham Gow

THERE'S NO DOUBTING the excellent purpose of this site, which is all about encouraging creative writing and sharing it with other people. But the Design Doctor thinks it could better promote this laudable mission with a little more attention to the detail of the site design. His triple-strength prescription should have the site tidied up in no time.

Get your spelling 'write'

As a site about writing, it makes sense to pay particular attention to spelling – there are a few notable clangers on the site which should really be corrected! If your Web design package does not offer a spell checking facility, try loading the pages one by one into a word processing package such as Word which can read HTML and check spelling. Just be sure not to save the document from within Word, as it will completely rewrite your HTML with lots of spurious new tags.

Gradients not great

The main site logo contains a fairly garish gradient effect in the background. This sort of graphical effect is quite outdated – it was very fashionable when computer-based design first came on stream but does not really cut the mustard nowadays. Why not have a go at redesigning the logo using a cleaner font, and maybe rework the site colour scheme based around the colours used in the new logo? A site about creative writing should surely be quite light and stylish in its graphical appearance. Perhaps a different body font is called for too – Verdana would look lovely.

Height isn't everything

The way that certain key pages are laid out makes them taller than they need to be. Remember that Web pages should be designed using the old newspaper adage of putting all the important content 'above the fold'. In Web page terms this means making sure that you have the key page elements visible to the user before they scroll down the page.

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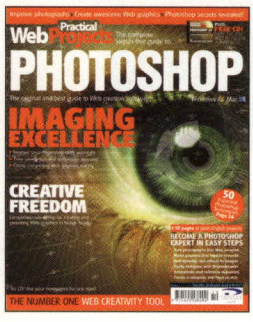

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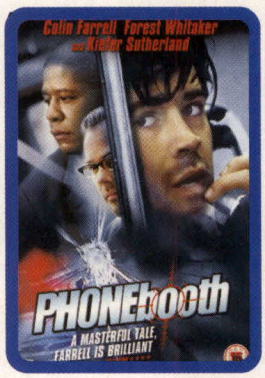

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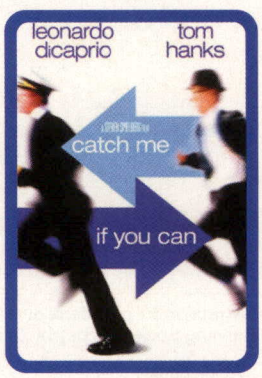

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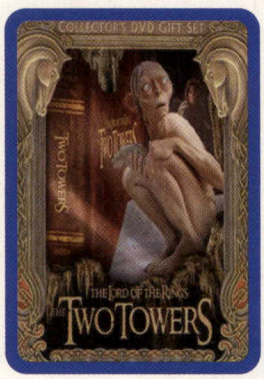

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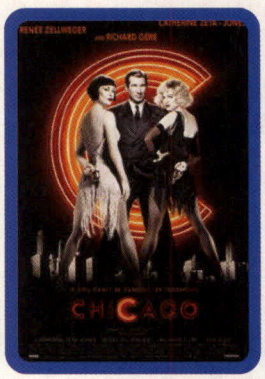

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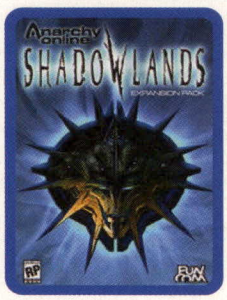

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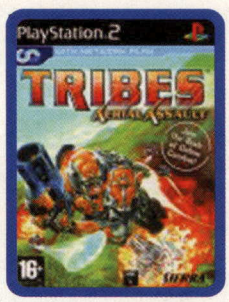

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Browsing

ESSENTIAL ADVICE ON GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR NET CONNECTION

WELCOME...

THERE CAN BE few people on this planet who haven't aspired to be a TV detective at some point in their lives. Whether you see yourself as a gun-wielding, Capri-driving action man like the Professionals, or perhaps a more refined character such as Jaguar owner Inspector Morse, you can find out what makes your cop idols tick on the Web. We've rounded up the greatest online police series tributes in this month's 'Find it now' feature. What's more, we show you how to take on the mantle of real-life sleuth in our guide to spying on what other users of your PC are getting up to, on page 88. We also investigate newsgroups, DVD ripping and eBay add-ons in this month's packed browsing workshop section.

James Thornton,
Features Editor

What's inside...

76 **Find it now: Cop sites**
Learn more about your favourite cop shows as we have a brush with the law online

78 **Newsgroup tips**
Tap into the almighty Usenet with our insightful newsgroup hints

80 **Rip DVD to MPEG**
Create backups of your favourite movies on your PC

82 **Improve your Web searches**
Cut through the rubbish on the Web by mining only the information you need using Internet Researcher

84 **Get to grips with Trillian**
Take four instant messengers into the shower? Not us, we use Trillian to integrate our chat clients

86 **eBay add-ons**
Win more auctions with the help of these handy eBay tools

88 **Spy on people using your PC**
Find out what others have been up to on your computer with our snooper's guide

90 **Web browsing Q+A**
Danny McAleer provides instant relief for your browsing headaches

Page 76

IMAGE CREDIT: © UNIVERSAL TV / THE KOBAL COLLECTION

STICK 'EM UP

PATROL THE WEB FOR TELLY'S GREATEST LAWMEN WITH OUR GUIDE TO THE TOP OF THE COPS

Other gems in your browsing section...

Still crazy after all these years: Newsgroups are still alive and kicking on the Net, and we show you why with this series of in-depth hints and tricks for using the ancient posting medium

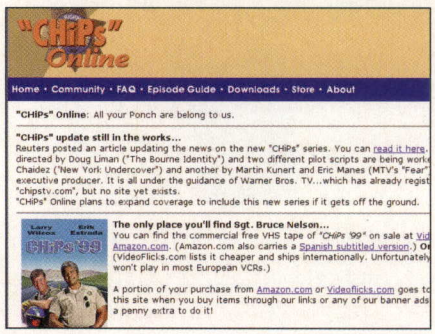
Wonder what other people are doing when they get on your PC? Worry no longer, thanks to our complete guide to monitoring your computer's Net activity with Desktop Detective

Find it now: Cop sites

EVERY MONTH WE SET OUR SEARCH HOUNDS LOOSE ON THE WEB TO PICK OUT THE BEST. THIS TIME WE ASK "WHAT'S ALL THIS, THEN?" AS WE ROUND UP THE NET'S TOP COP SITES

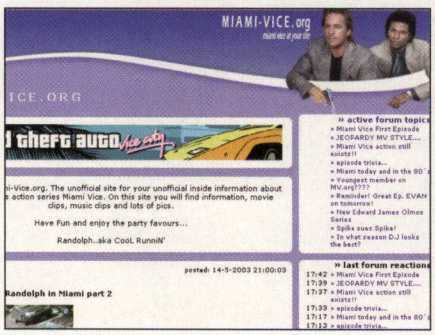
1 CHiPs
www.adequate.com/chips

If you were growing up in the late Seventies, chances are at some point you ran around pretending to be either Jon or Ponch from *CHiPs*. The bike-riding cops gained cult status after six seasons of the show and there are now whispers of a new series. To find out more, drop in on this online tribute, which houses news, episode guides and ratings, audio and video downloads, as well as a handy *CHiPs* glossary.


"CHiPs" Online
Home • Community • FAQ • Episode Guide • Downloads • Store • About
"CHiPs" Online: All your Ponch are belong to us.
"CHiPs" update still in the works...
The only place you'll find Sgt. Bruce Nelson...

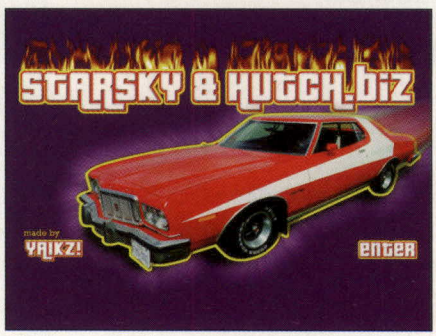
2 Miami Vice
www.miami-vice.org

Shattering the image of podgy, pie-eating bobbies on the beat, Don Johnson set hearts fluttering with his role as the super-smooth Crockett in the classic Eighties cop show. The online hide-out of the guys who made Hawaiian shirts cool is chock-full of goodies, including one of the most comprehensive episode guides we've seen. There's also a section dedicated to cars used in the show, plus a music area.



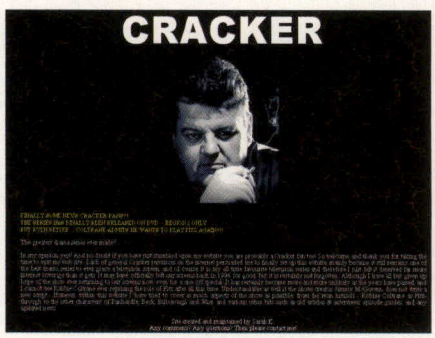
3 Starsky & Hutch
www.starskyandhutch.biz

Guns, cars and women were the order of the day for TV cops in the Seventies, and Starsky and Hutch were fine exponents of this. They weren't bad at nabbing drug dealers, pimps and muggers either, and this unofficial site pays homage to the dynamic duo in its episode guide and forum. There's plenty more too, including details of the forthcoming movie and info on the Ford Torino made famous by the show.



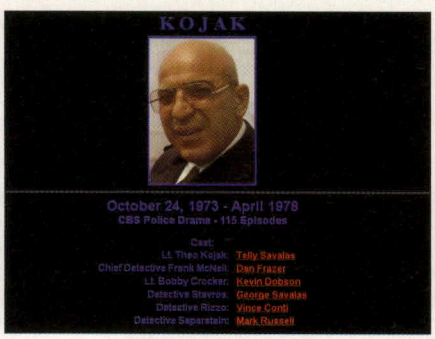
4 Cracker
www.crackertv.co.uk

Despite his vices, Fitz became one of Britain's best-loved telly detectives. The award-winning show may have disappeared from our screens, but the legend brought to life by Robbie Coltrane lives on through this unofficial home page. Though low on pictures and downloadable goodies, the site is crammed with facts and insights into the life of the portly investigator.



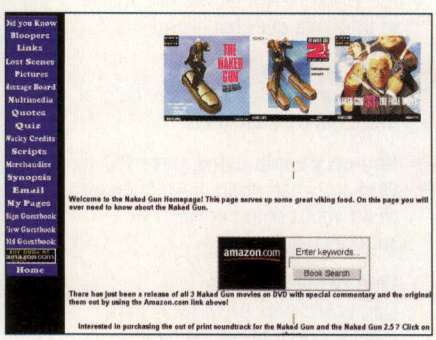
5 Kojak
www.timvp.com/kojak.html

Looking like a Greek version of Duncan Goodhew, Telly Savalas carved out a successful career as the hard-hitting, lollipop-sucking Theo Kojak. Never afraid to bend the law a little to get his man, Kojak earned a reputation as one of the most ruthless cops of the Seventies. This page contains info about the show plus links to other Kojak sites, including the official Savalas site.


KOJAK
October 24, 1973 - April 1978
CBS Police Drama - 115 Episodes
Cast:
Lt. Theo Kojak: Telly Savalas
Chief Detective Frank McNeil: Dan Frazer
Lt. Bobby Crocker: Kevin Dobson
Detective Stavros: George Savalas
Detective Rizzo: Vince Conti
Detective Saperstein: Mark Russell

6 Naked Gun
www.geocities.com/hollywood/trailer/3980/

Like a blind man at an orgy, you're just gonna have to feel your way around this site. Fans of *The Naked Gun* and its parent show *Police Squad* will love the silliness on offer. As well as dozens of Frank Drebin quotes, the site is home to bloopers, lost scenes, pictures and scripts relating to the bungling Lieutenant.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Home
Welcome to the Naked Gun Homepage! This page serves up some great viking food. On this page you will ever need to know about the Naked Gun.
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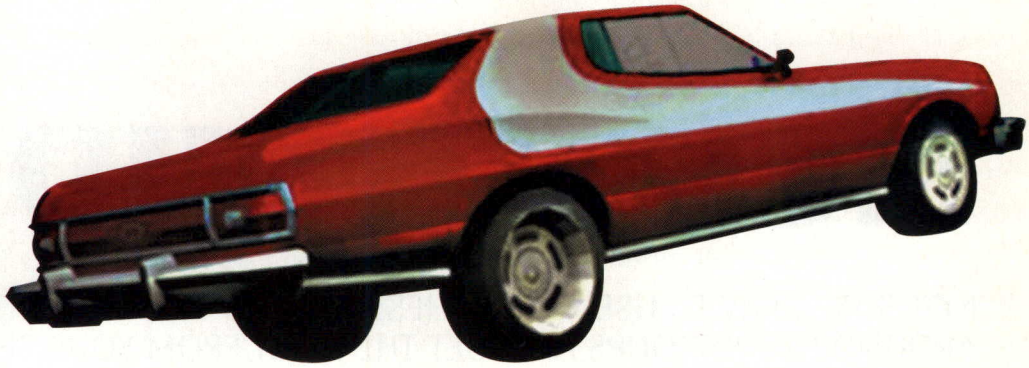
There has just been a release of all 3 Naked Gun movies on DVD with special commentary and the original them out by using the Amazon.com link above!
Interested in purchasing the out of print soundtrack for the Naked Gun and the Naked Gun 2.5? Click on

"On the *The Bill*'s Web site, you can win the clothes worn in the show"



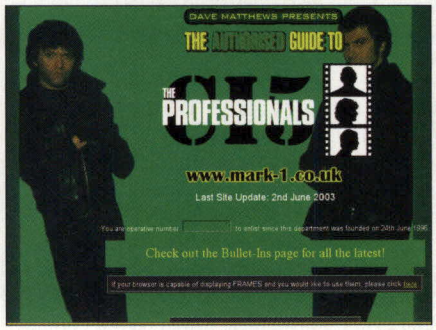
7 Heartbeat
www.heartbeat-online.fsnet.co.uk

He may not have been as macho as the cops in Miami Vice, but PC Nick Rowan (Nick Berry) was a favourite. *Heartbeat* still attracts huge screen audiences and this unofficial site is probably the best you'll find. There's a detailed episode guide, character profiles and an insight into how it was first conceived. Probably the best feature is the 'Ashfordly Gazette' – a news section mocked up in the style of a local paper.

HEARTBEAT - Online
The ultimate Heartbeat resource on the Net!
Unofficial Heartbeat Website
CLICK HERE TO ENTER THE SITE
Nadine's Heartbeat Haven!
CLICK HERE TO ENTER THE SITE
HEARTBEAT

8 The Professionals
www.personal.u-net.com/~carnfort/professionals

Messrs Doyle and Brodie's propensity for violence was matched only by their shocking taste in vehicles. While the Miami Vice cops glammed it up in a Ferrari Daytona, they settled for a Ford Capri. This huge site contains pretty much everything you could wish to know about the elite team, including an examination of the show, case histories, mugshots and vehicle info.


DAVE MATTHEWS PRESENTS
THE AUTHORISED GUIDE TO
THE PROFESSIONALS
www.mark-1.co.uk
Last Site Update: 2nd June 2003
Check out the Bullet-Ins page for all the latest!

9 The Bill
www.thebill.com

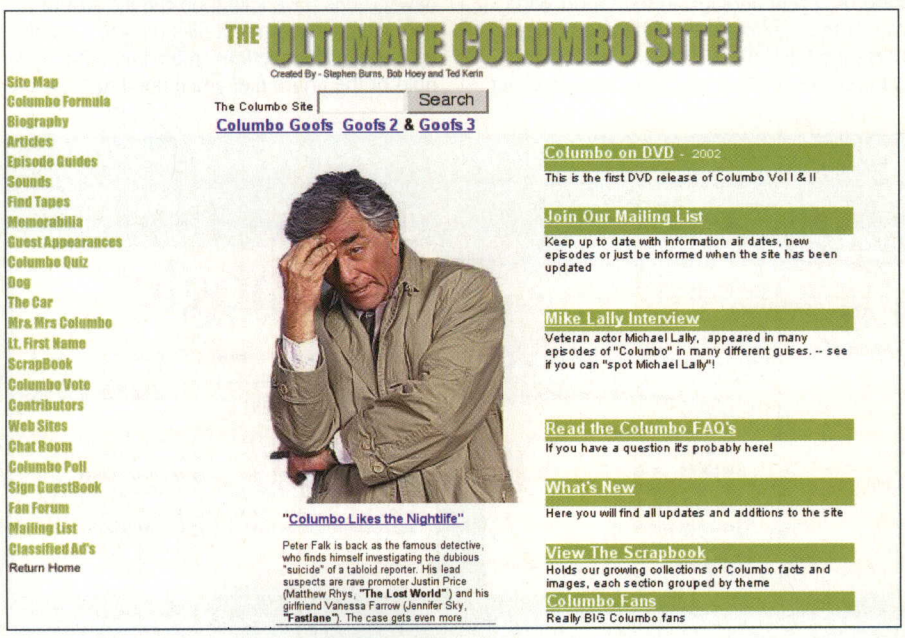
As one of Britain's longest-running police dramas, there's plenty of history for this official site to cover. The Old Bill section takes you down memory lane, profiling some of the programme's greatest characters. There's also plenty of stuff on the current crop of bobbies, with character profiles, news and guides to the latest episodes. You'll even find competitions where you can win clothes worn in the show.

10 Columbo
www.columbo-site.freeuk.com

If there's been a 'mooyda', the first person you want on the case is Lieutenant Columbo. As this huge site is keen to point out, the chain-smoking detective has cracked over 63 cases with a 100 percent record of success. The popular cop, played by Peter Falk, was famed for his powers of deduction as he steadily figured out whodunit, in one of the few programmes where the viewer knew the killer before the sleuth.

The site contains page upon page of fascinating features, including a biography, details of guest appearances and a Columbo quiz. The creator certainly knows his Columbo, and the site delves into every aspect of the Lieutenant's life including his wife, his car and his dog.

Just one more thing... The site also reveals a little known fact – Columbo's first name, although we'll leave it up to you to log on and find out.


THE ULTIMATE COLUMBO SITE!
Created By - Stephen Burns, Bob Hoey and Ted Kerin
Site Map
Columbo Formula
Biography
Articles
Episode Guides
Sounds
Find Tapes
Memorabilia
Guest Appearances
Columbo Quiz
Dog
The Car
Mrs. Mrs Columbo
Lt. First Name
ScrapBook
Columbo Vote
Contributors
Web Sites
Chat Room
Columbo Poll
Sign GuestBook
Fan Forum
Mailing List
Classified Ad's
Return Home
The Columbo Site
Search
Columbo Goofs Goofs 2 & Goofs 3
"Columbo Likes the Nightlife"
Peter Falk is back as the famous detective, who finds himself investigating the dubious "suicide" of a tabloid reporter. His lead suspects are rave promoter Justin Price (Matthew Rhys, "The Lost World") and his girlfriend Vanessa Farrow (Jennifer Sky, "Fastlane"). The case gets even more
Columbo on DVD - 2002
This is the first DVD release of Columbo Vol I & II
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Veteran actor Michael Lally, appeared in many episodes of "Columbo" in many different guises. -- see if you can "spot Michael Lally"!
Read the Columbo FAQ's
If you have a question it's probably here!
What's New
Here you will find all updates and additions to the site
View The Scrapbook
Holds our growing collections of Columbo facts and images, each section grouped by theme
Columbo Fans
Really BIG Columbo fans

Newsgroup tips

NOT SURE HOW TO USE THEM? THESE TEN TOP TIPS WILL HELP YOU FIND YOUR WAY AROUND NEWSGROUPS AND GET THE MOST FROM YOUR SEARCHES

1 Finding what you want

It's all very well signing up to a newsgroup and configuring your newsreader software to read all the available posts, but it isn't much good if you don't know how to go about finding topics and news strings that may be of interest to you. So the first thing to do is to go to the 'Find' bar and enter what sort of information you are after. In a similar way that you'd use an Internet search engine, you can filter message posts to find anything from news topics to specific files for download.

If you're looking for a discussion on folklore, simply enter 'folklore' into the search bar and your newsreader will go and find any strings that match. If you're looking for MP3 files, just chuck in 'MP3' and you'll have a list of all groups that deal with this type of file. When the list of results is displayed, you can go through and double-click to select any you want to subscribe to, and then you can browse each string individually or search your selections for more specific topics.

2 Online newsgroups

A recent addition to the World Wide Web is the realm of the online newsgroups. These are basically Web-based newsgroup communities that do not require newsreader software to interact with, instead letting you do it all through your standard Internet browser. A good example of this is Google Groups, found by going to **www.google.com** and clicking on the 'Groups' link. This will take you to the Groups' search facility that will let you search all of the available groups in the same way as a newsreader program, and can dig up all the same file types and attachments as a bonus.

The main benefit of online newsgroups is that they don't require you to configure any software, so we highly recommend them for all people who are new to newsgroups. Also, they are free to use once you sign up for an account, making them even more attractive.

3 Newsgroup robots

For all you file downloaders, the most important newsgroups are found in the 'alt.binaries' listings. These denote posts that have file attachments, and mean that you can find practically any type of file you like to download onto your computer. The most common file formats for download are MP3s, pictures and movie files, which can of course be pretty big in terms of size. As most newsgroups have a limit on the file size of post attachments, most files tend to be split up into smaller sections, meaning that to get hold of the entire file, you'll need to download all the individual parts and then stick them together. This process is covered later, but for now you'll want to know the easiest way to save file attachments from newsgroups posts.

Fortunately, there are many programs out there that will do all the digging around for you, and simply display a list of all the files available on any particular newsgroup. NewsBin is perhaps the easiest to master, and is available for trial at **www.newsbin.com**. Enter the address of your news server into NewsBin, and this great little robot will display all the available file attachments and allow you to simply double-click on any that you may want to download.

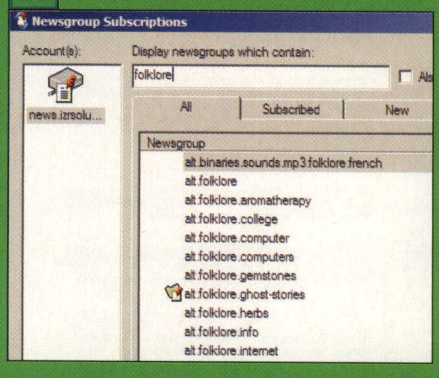
The best part is that you can have multiple simultaneous downloads, so harvesting numerous file segments is no problem at all.

4 Combining segmented files

As mentioned, newsgroup attachment files are often too big to be posted whole, and so have to be split up and posted in parts. While this keeps the individual segment files small, this does of course mean that you'll have to stick them together again once you have downloaded all the sections.

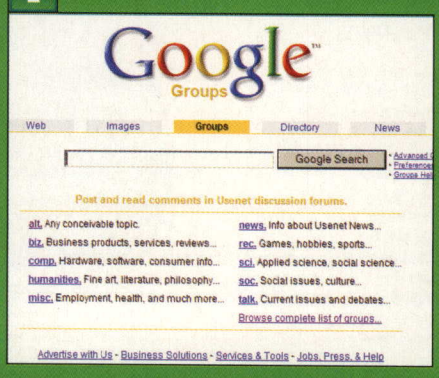
Most split files are posted in the **.RAR** format, meaning that they have been split

1



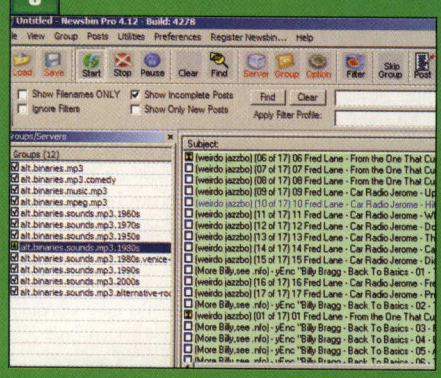
Searching newsgroups is just like searching the Net

2


Google
Groups
Web
Images
Groups
Directory
News
Google Search
Post and read comments in Usenet discussion forums.
alt. Any conceivable topic.
biz. Business products, services, reviews...
comp. Hardware, software, consumer info...
humanities. Fine art, literature, philosophy...
misc. Employment, health, and much more...
news. Info about Usenet News...
rec. Games, hobbies, sports...
sci. Applied science, social science...
soc. Social issues, culture...
talk. Current issues and debates...
Browse complete list of groups...
Advertise with Us - Business Solutions - Services & Tools - Jobs, Press, & Help

Online newsgroups save you configuring newsreading software

3



NewsBin makes downloading newsgroup file attachments a breeze

using the WinRAR archiving program **www.rarlab.com**. So to stick them back together, you'll need to download the free version of WinRAR from the Web site and then open the first archive segment of the file that you want to rearrange. When you ask the program to extract the file, it will automatically stitch it back together for you as long as you have downloaded every required segment. Simple.

5 Information is power

The primary reason for the birth of online newsgroups was that people wanted a message board system to enable them to talk with like-minded people about subjects that they were interested in.

It seems obvious to point out, but there's a whole host of useful information out there on the news servers, which makes them perhaps an even more useful resource than the Internet for finding out about specific subjects. It's easy to forget that a newsgroup is a dynamic and highly active community, so if you're after information that you cannot find on the Web, take a look in the newsgroups, as there's bound to be someone who can help point you in the right direction.

6 Posting etiquette

Newsgroups are a two-way thing, and when you stumble upon a thread that looks interesting you may want to post your own message or response. Bear in mind, though, that just as online chatting has 'Netiquette', newsgroups are also regarded as a place to mind your Ps and Qs. Many threads are moderated, which means that posts are read by a moderator before they're added to the list. So if your message is too off-topic or vaguely offensive, you may have your post denied.

7 Free groups

Many news servers like to charge you a subscription fee to access them, but fortunately there are a good number of servers that offer their services absolutely free. A simple Google search for 'free newsgroups' will bring up streams of results, and all you have to do is enter the address in your newsreader software to begin browsing.

8 More than one

With the amount of free newsgroups available on the Net, it would seem a bit daft if you were to just sign up with one. Why not create accounts in your newsreader for a number of different news servers, so that you can always be sure you're getting the most from your searches.

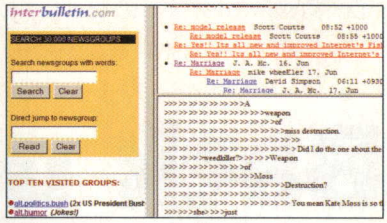
9 Want to create your own group?

If you do, make sure you have: a) lots of time and: b) lots of patience, because it's not easy. A formal application needs to be sent to a newsgroup moderator, and your topic has to go before a panel before it gets okayed. Then it's a matter of waiting around for formal permission – so don't say we didn't warn you!

10 Combining posts into one file

While sifting through a good newsgroup, you may come across a number of individual posts that you want to combine into one file for easy viewing. To do this, simply Ctrl-click on each post you want to add, then right-click on any selected post and choose 'Combine' and 'Decode'. Then you can rearrange your posts into any order you like and click 'OK' to squash them all together.

Searching alternatives



Interbulletin

news.interbulletin.com/

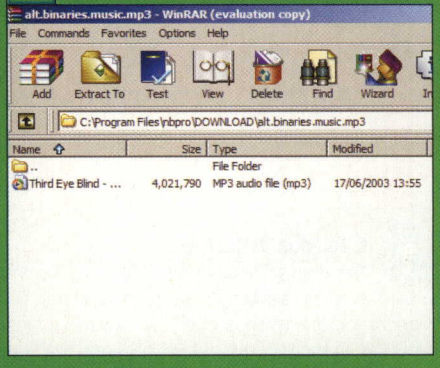
This is a great online newsgroup server that works within your Web browser, meaning you don't have to mess around with configuring special software to be able to enjoy Usenet. With over 30,000 newsgroups active, this is a good place to start for all those new to Usenet who want an uncomplicated introduction.

Newzbot

www.newzbot.com

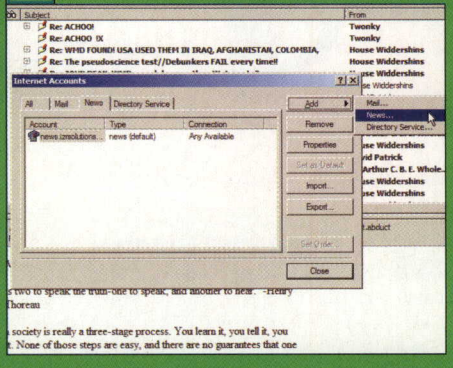
Newzbot is an extensive online search engine for newsgroup servers. Much more efficient than the Find bar in your newsreader software, it will trawl its huge list of news servers to find all groups that contain topics matching your criteria. This is a great way of deciding what newsgroup servers to sign up to, as you can examine their content before taking the plunge.

4



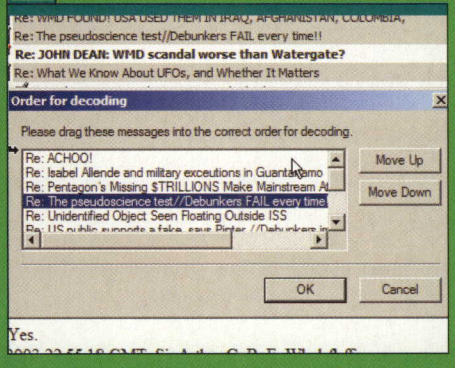
WinRAR puts download segments together to form the original file

8



There are so many free newsgroups, make sure to sign up for a few!

10


Re: The pseudoscience test//Debunkers FAIL every time!!
Re: JOHN DEAN: WMD scandal worse than Watergate?
Re: What We Know About UFOs, and Whether It Matters
Order for decoding
Please drag these messages into the correct order for decoding.
Re: ACHOO!
Re: Isabel Allende and military exceutions in Guantanamo
Re: Pentagon's Missing $TRILLIONS Make Mainstream At
Re: The pseudoscience test//Debunkers FAIL every time
Re: Unidentified Object Seen Floating Outside ISS
Move Up
Move Down
OK
Cancel

You can order posts into one file by simply dragging and dropping

In brief:
Task: Rip DVD movies to your hard drive
Software I need: Amigo DVD ripper & DVD Clone (trial versions)
Difficulty: Very simple
Time I need: A few hours

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

Back up your DVD movies to file and CD

TRANSFER YOUR FAVOURITE FLICKS TO MPEG OR BURN THEM TO CD AND SAVE YOURSELF THE HASSLE OF WORRYING ABOUT LOSING OR DAMAGING THE MASTERS

JUST IMAGINE THE tragedy. Your treasured special edition of Britney Spears' *Crossroads: The Director's Cut* has been hideously damaged. The celebrated teen road movie simply won't play due to an unsightly and inexplicable scratch. While some might call this a blessing, others may have no alternative but to nip out and buy another copy. A drastic measure, considering the cost of DVDs these days – but there are ways to prevent nightmare scenarios like this from happening.

DVD 'ripping' is the latest trend to make copyright lawyers sweat, and it does teeter on the brink of criminal. However, the theory is that you do have a right to make personal backups of your discs if that's all they are. We would reiterate that copying licensed material with intent to distribute is piracy and not advised.

This tutorial will show you how to use two of the most popular DVD backup utilities. The first, Amigo, will convert DVD data into MPEG or AVI file formats. These can then be stored and viewed on a PC without a DVD drive. After that we show you DVD Clone, which will quickly duplicate the whole disc onto a DVD-R. Now where'd that rusty nail go?

Let's Begin
Welcome to Amigo DVD Ripper v2.8.21
Please select a function mode:
Wizard Mode
Wizard will guide you to specify necessary parameters to rip a DVD movie, all has default value even you know nothing about DVD terminology!
Quick Mode
Opertion mode almost same to previou version. No parameter needs to be sepcified. A very quickly method to rip DVD with default parameters
Don't show this dialog in the future
Next
Cancel

1 Getting started

Start the program and bypass the registration prompt. A menu dialog will appear asking you which mode you wish to use; 'Wizard' or 'Quick'. It's best to start with the wizard, so click the corresponding radio button and then hit the 'Next' button.

5 Rip it up

If you find that Amigo tries to define more options for additional IFO files, cancel them and delete unless desired. The first IFO file is the one we want, so highlight it and get going by clicking the 'Rip-it' button on the main toolbar.

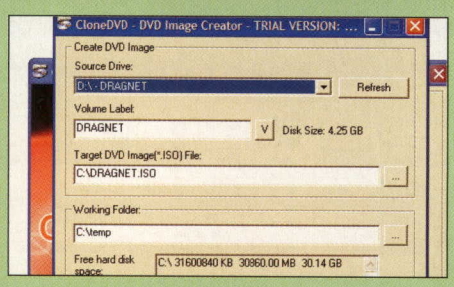
Breeding DVDs...

Once you have your DVD converted into a chosen file format, there's nothing to stop you writing it to disc for storage. However, this isn't ideal because although the files will play on PCs with no problem, they won't work with regular domestic drives. If you want backups in a standard DVD format, full-on duplication is the answer. Luckily, utilities are available that will copy whole DVDs to writable ones, and DVD Clone is one of them. This means that should your master copy go astray or be destroyed by fire, you'll have another. Being compatible with your PC's player and the dusty one under the telly, there'll be no reason not to enjoy uninterrupted viewing bliss!

CloneDVD Ver 1.21 - Trial Version
Step 1: Create DVD Image (*.ISO File)
Step 2: Burn DVD Image (*.ISO File)
Step 3: Play DVD Now...
Tips:
You can also burn DVD Image(*.ISO file) with following burning programs:
Roxio Easy CD & DVD Creator
Ahead Nero Burning ROM
Stomp RecordNow Max
CloneDVD

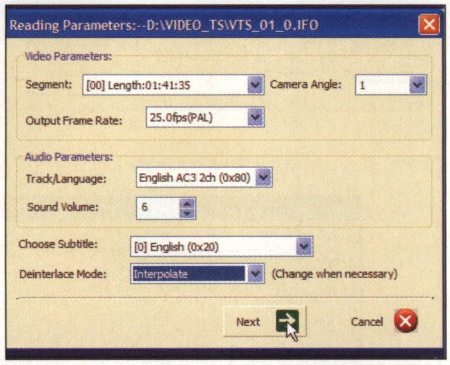
1 The opening menu

DVD Clone's opening dialog is a simple menu with three numbered buttons. Make sure your DVD is loaded in its drive and click the one labelled 'Create DVD Image'. This is the first step that compiles an image or ISO file used to burn the disc.



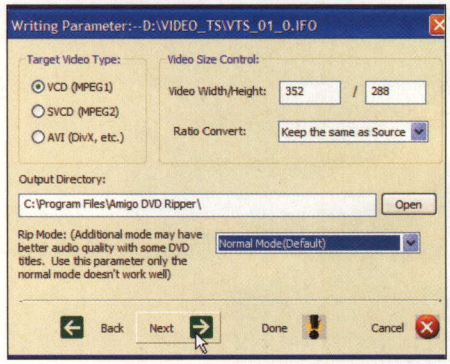
2 Create image

This dialog confirms which DVD is in the drive and where the completed ISO file will be stored. The working folder is where the program will temporarily store the DVD data, with available hard disk space and progress bar displayed. Click 'Build ISO File' to initiate.



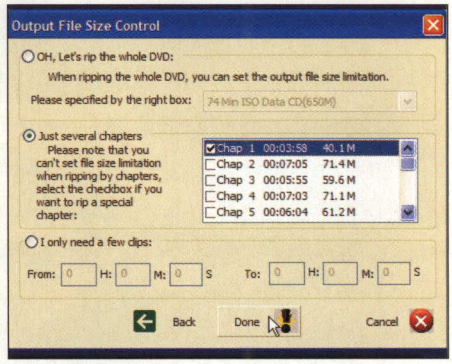
2 Reading Parameters

Provided your DVD is in the drive, Amigo will scan the disc for IFO files. These contain encoded data needed to play the movie, along with any extras. You can leave most of the first settings as default, but you may like to remove subtitles. Click 'Next'.



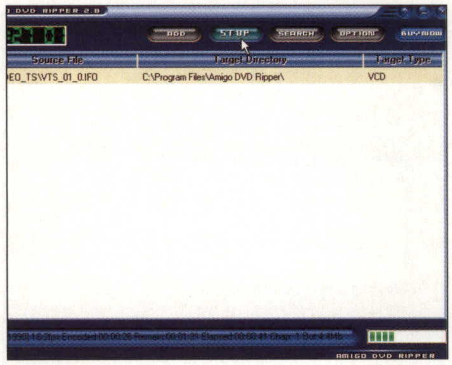
3 Writing Parameters

These options define what form the copy file will take, including which format it should be in. We'll use MPEG1 and leave the video sizes as default. Use the 'Output Directory' path to specify where the file is saved and hit the 'Normal' rip mode. Click 'Next'.


Output File Size Control
OH, Let's rip the whole DVD:
When ripping the whole DVD, you can set the output file size limitation.
Please specified by the right box:
74 Min ISO Data CD(650M)
Just several chapters
Please note that you can't set file size limitation when ripping by chapters, select the checkbox if you want to rip a special chapter:
Chap 1 00:03:58 40.1 M
Chap 2 00:07:05 71.4 M
Chap 3 00:05:55 59.6 M
Chap 4 00:07:03 71.1 M
Chap 5 00:06:04 61.2 M
I only need a few clips:
From:
To:
Back
Done
Cancel

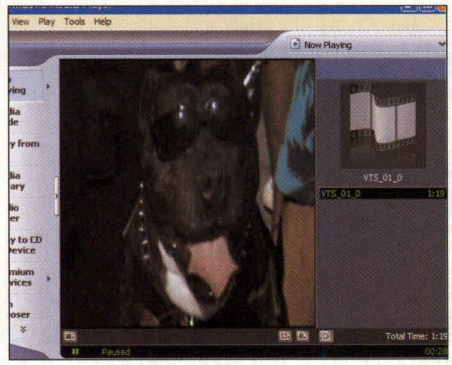
4 File size

This is where you decide how much of the DVD is to be copied. Selecting the first option rips the whole disc, with the box below setting the size limit. The second lets you copy single chapters; the third grabs specific scenes. Click 'Done' when ready.



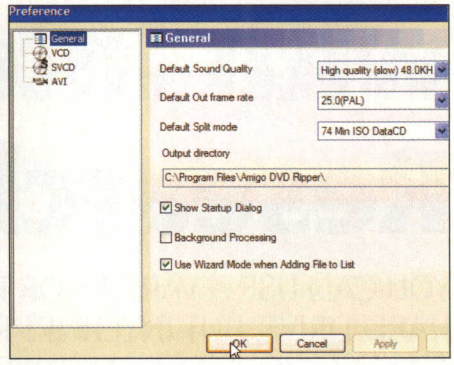
6 Progress report

As copying commences, you'll notice a green progress indicator. The blue bar in the bottom panel contains information about how much of the file conversion has elapsed. If you wish to halt the process click 'Stop'.



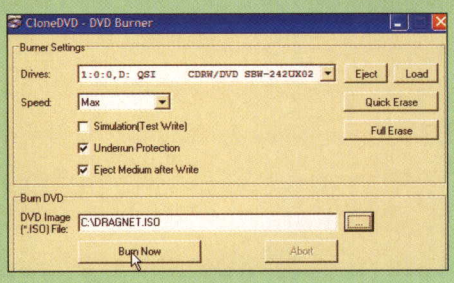
7 Let's play

Playback is typically far better when viewed in a smaller window, although larger scales do remain watchable. Sound quality is very good and of course you can now view the movie without DVD or drive.



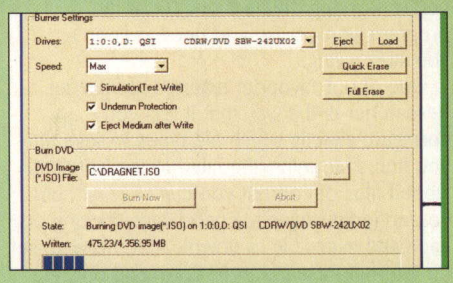
8 Configuration

You may decide that playback could be improved by changing conversion options. Clicking the 'Option' button opens a properties dialog. Here you can alter audio quality, frame rate and more, should you need to.



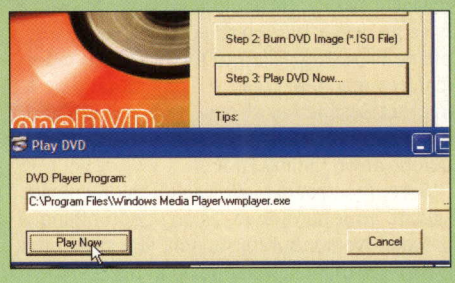
3 Create clone

Once the time-consuming process of creating the image is finished, go back to the main menu and select the second button labelled 'Burn DVD Image'. The dialog lets you set writing options for your drive and locate the image file, before clicking 'Burn Now'.



4 Burn it

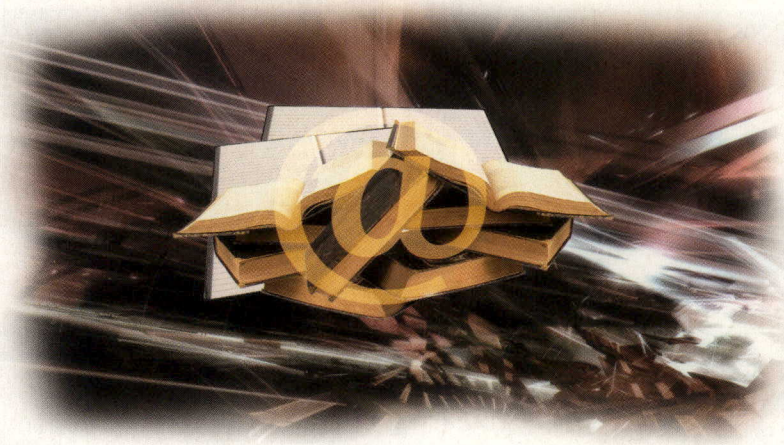
A progress bar informs you how much of your clone has been created, along with a megabyte counter. One thing to note is that the program won't warn you if the disc you're using is too small for the file. Only recordable DVDs will have enough capacity.



5 Play time

The last button on the main menu dialog is used for actually playing a disc. This can be either the original DVD or the clone, and just opens an external player. A prompt box asks you to locate a suitable program path and the 'Play Now' button launches.

In brief:
Task: Use Internet Researcher to store entire sites on your hard drive
Software I need: Internet Researcher
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: Depends on the site you want to save



Better browsing with Internet Researcher

YOU CAN USE A VARIETY OF TOOLS TO SAVE PAGES TO YOUR HARD DRIVE, BUT INTERNET RESEARCHER HAS A FEW TRICKS TO MAKE YOUR SURFING LIFE MORE PRODUCTIVE THAN EVER

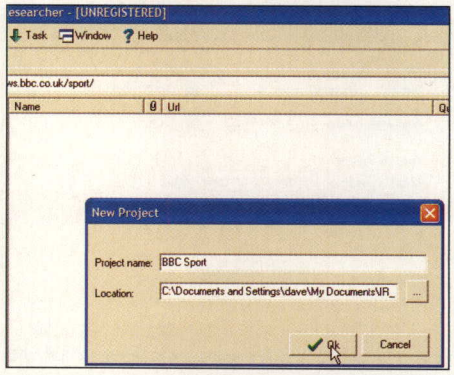
OFFLINE BROWSING WAS once very nearly a very big thing in the world of the Net. Alas, the nature of the Internet meant that people always wanted to have the latest versions of sites, even if it meant being online for more of the time. With broadband now providing juicy always-on action for two million people in the UK, surely the end must be nigh for offline browsers?

A quick look at Internet Researcher, however, and you should think again if you have an overly pessimistic outlook regarding offline browsing. Filled to the brim with more features than you could shake a bit fat pipe at, Internet Researcher should have enough to make even the most sceptical take a brief detour down Offline Lane.

Sure, the program allows you to download sites to your hard drive, as any good offline browser would, but this is a bit like saying that David Beckham is well-known in his home town of Leytonstone. For a start, Internet Researcher allows you to grab hold of previously 'difficult' files, including embedded documents. So, the next time you save a Web page to your hard drive in Internet Explorer and then realise a few days later that you don't have the all-important Flash file, consider what Internet Researcher could have done for you.

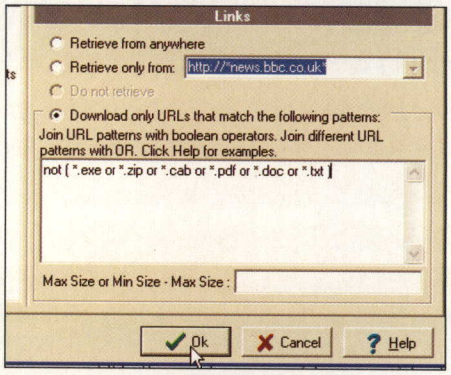
Even better, Internet Researcher lets you build up static versions of dynamic Web pages. Confused? Well, this basically means that you can now download sites with online forms, eCommerce facilities and anything that the visitor interacts with. Obviously, much of the interaction will be disabled when you're working offline, but at least the program won't crash and burn as soon as you start trying.

One of our favourite features of Internet Researcher is the way that it lets you configure exactly which file types to save. If you find a stunning site filled to the brim with zipped files of content you can't live without, you no longer have to spend ages clicking on each and every file to download it. Instead, set up Internet Researcher to download only zip files, pop out for a relaxing walk, then come back to find all the files you were after. Let's be honest here – this isn't offline browsing at all, and we'd be much better off describing this as a leeching facility. Whatever it's called, though, it's a brilliant feature.



1 Create a new project

First off, we need to create a new project. To do this, click on the 'New' icon in the main toolbar, then enter a name and location for your project to be saved. Enter the URL of the site you want to save in the Address bar, and we're ready to go.

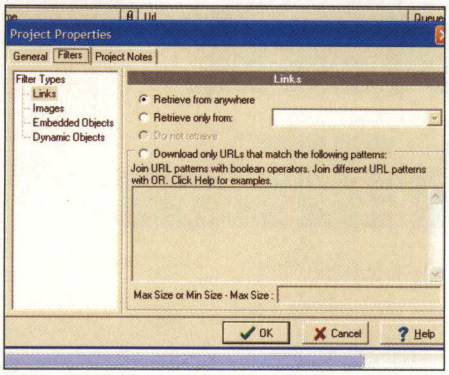

Links
Retrieve from anywhere
Retrieve only from:
http://*news.bbc.co.uk*
Do not retrieve
Download only URLs that match the following patterns:
Join URL patterns with boolean operators. Join different URL patterns with OR. Click Help for examples.
not (*.exe or *.zip or *.cab or *.pdf or *.doc or *.txt)
Max Size or Min Size - Max Size :
Ok
Cancel
Help

4 Images only

If you want to pick up all the images on a site but nothing else, go to the Properties window, click 'Filters', 'Links' and enter the above in the Patterns window. This tells Internet Researcher what not to download – pretty much anything except image files.

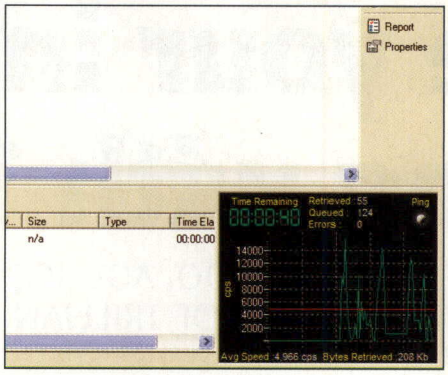
7 Moving through the Web

The main advantage and most common probable use of this, is that you don't have to worry about whether a project link leads to another site or not, as Internet Researcher will automatically take you to the new link as any other browser would.



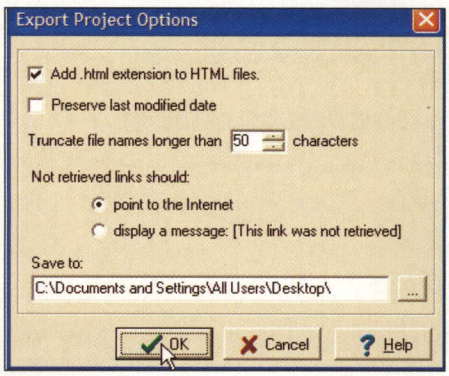
2 Project properties

Having saved the basics of your new project, there are two more things to do. First, click the 'Properties' icon and set the properties for images, links, dynamic files and embedded objects. Next, set the depth you'd like to go on the right. Click 'Get'.



3 Get out more

IR will now begin saving the entire site you've specified to your hard drive. This can take anything from 30 seconds to a couple of hours, depending on connection and file sizes. You can always keep track of progress via the constantly-updated graph.

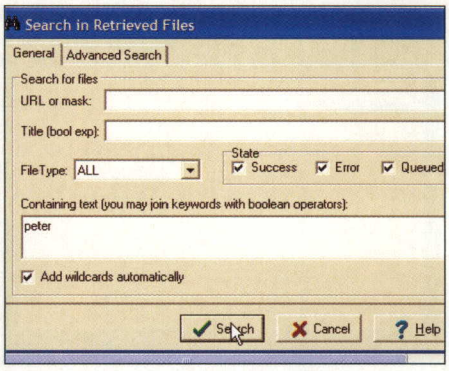


5 Exporting out

Once your project's complete, you can export it to work in whichever browser you choose. Click 'Export' in the main toolbar, then adjust your settings to fit; you might want to set broken links to display a message, rather than point to a link on the Web.

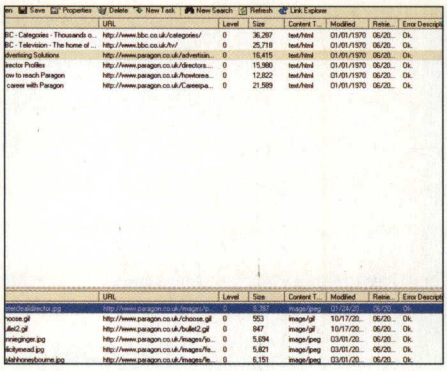
6 Alternative browsing

Alternatively, you could use the browsing facilities in Internet Researcher itself. In fact, not only can you move through the pages you save to your hard drive, but you can also navigate using tabbed browsing – a feature even IE6 doesn't have!



8 Searching for files

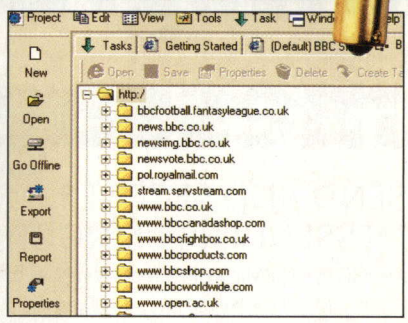
Another advantage IR has is that you can search through projects for keywords and filenames – something you can't do with traditional browsers. Click 'Search' and enter the word you'd like to search for. IR will now scan through all of your projects.



9 Search results

After a while, you'll be presented with a list of results. Internet Researcher lists each as an HTML file. If you click on this, you'll see a list of the files for this page at the bottom of the page, making it much easier to find the file in question.

Power users' tip



ONCE YOU'VE DOWNLOADED your site, it's entirely conceivable that you'll want to navigate around the pages as you would with an online collection. There are a couple of ways of doing this: you can use the standard browsing method that takes you through links as if you were using any Web browser. A different way around the file browsing conundrum can be found in the 'Site Structure' section of Internet Researcher. This gives you a Windows Explorer-style tree folder interface, and lets you move around each and every file as if it were a basic file on your hard drive.

Jargon buster

Depth

Any time you choose to save a Web page in Internet Researcher, you'll be asked to set a 'depth' value. This relates to how many pages deep the program should go when saving. If Internet Researcher was to download just the URL that you enter into it, this could be seen as having a depth of zero. A depth of one, therefore, means that the program will download all the links on all the pages linked to from the home page. A depth of ten might not seem much, but will result in Internet Researcher having to find thousands of pages.

Export

A familiar name within all kinds of software, this is the process by which you save a file in a particular way to make it accessible within another piece of software. In Internet Researcher's case, this involves converting each project file into the HTML and image files that made up the Web pages themselves. In essence, exporting your files in Internet Researcher is like performing a more advanced 'Save As' function in Internet Explorer.

In brief:
Task: Consolidate your instant messengers
Software I need: Trillian 0.74 is on the CD
Difficulty: Easier than using a fax machine but harder than talking
Time I need: Depends how chatty you're feeling

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

Integrate your instant messaging with Trillian

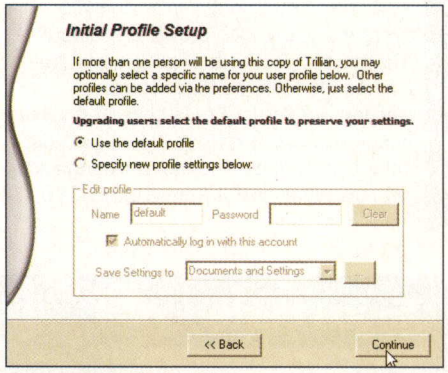
SEND AND RECEIVE MESSAGES FROM YAHOO, AOL, ICQ AND MSN MESSENGERS USING THE LATEST VERSION OF TRILLIAN

ALONG WITH SMS, instant messaging has been one of the most revolutionary developments in communication since Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone.

One problem, though, has plagued the chat medium since its conception. The fact that MSN Messenger users can't communicate with people using ICQ, or AIM fans chat with devote Yahoo! Messenger users has always infuriated Net users, as not everyone uses the same client.

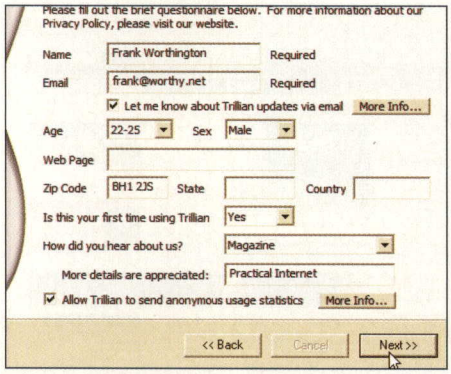
While inroads are being made towards compatibility (AIM is now compatible with ICQ,) the developers are still far from an integrated solution. All is not lost however, as there's a program that can let you send and receive instant messages to and from users of any client.

Named after a character in the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, Trillian is a multi-network chat client that makes communication between AIM, ICQ, MSN, Yahoo Messenger and even mIRC possible. It looks great and contains as many, if not more, messaging features as most other IM clients, including docking, buddy alerts, skin support and the ability to import existing contacts.


Initial Profile Setup
If more than one person will be using this copy of Trillian, you may optionally select a specific name for your user profile below. Other profiles can be added via the preferences. Otherwise, just select the default profile.
Upgrading users: select the default profile to preserve your settings.
Use the default profile
Specify new profile settings below:
Edit profile
Name default
Password
Clear
Automatically log in with this account
Save Settings to Documents and Settings
<< Back
Continue

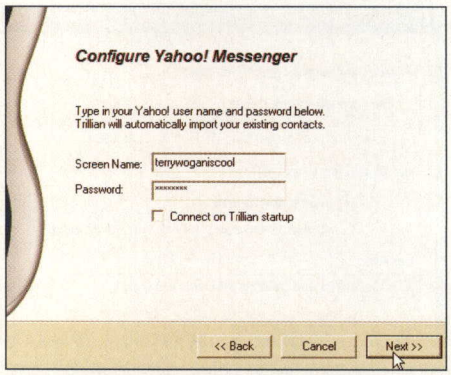
1 Profile setup

After installing and launching the application you'll be greeted with the Trillian Configuration wizard. If other people besides yourself will be using the program, you can select a specific name for your user profile at the first menu that appears.


Please fill out the brief questionnaire below. For more information about our Privacy Policy, please visit our website.
Name Frank Worthington Required
Email frank@worthy.net Required
Let me know about Trillian updates via email More Info...
Age 22-25 Sex Male
Web Page
Zip Code BH1 2JS State Country
Is this your first time using Trillian Yes
How did you hear about us? Magazine
More details are appreciated: Practical Internet
Allow Trillian to send anonymous usage statistics More Info...
<< Back
Cancel
Next >>

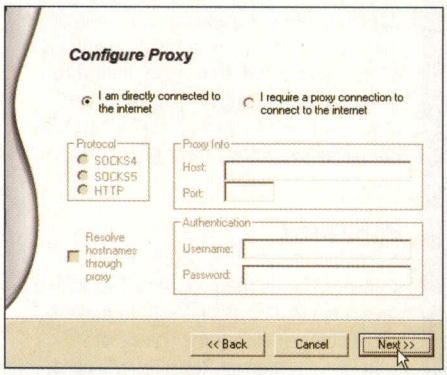
2 Enter your details

You'll now be asked to enter some personal details about yourself before you proceed with the configuration. Be sure to uncheck the box at the bottom of this menu if you don't want Trillian to send anonymous usage stats.


Configure Yahoo! Messenger
Type in your Yahoo! user name and password below. Trillian will automatically import your existing contacts.
Screen Name: terrywoganiscool
Password:
Connect on Trillian startup
<< Back
Cancel
Next >>

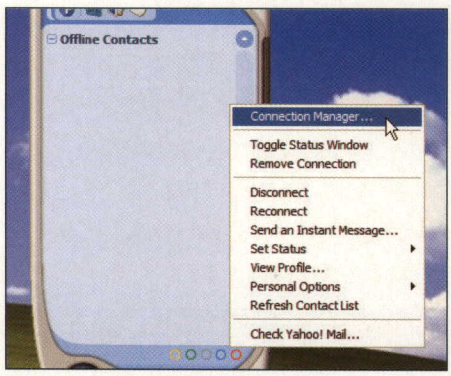
3 Configure multiple accounts

Now's the chance to configure the program to handle all your instant messaging accounts. Enter the username and password for your AIM, ICQ, MSN and Yahoo accounts (if you have one), clicking 'Next' to cycle through them.



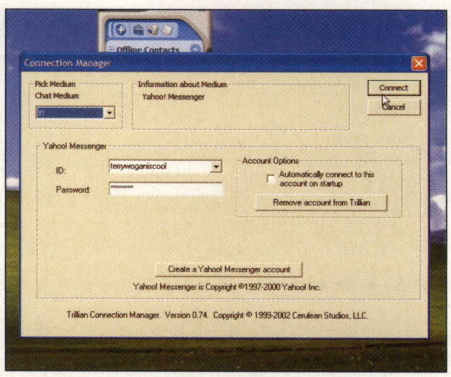
4 Proxy settings

If you connect to the Net behind a proxy server, you'll need to tell the program that you do so. Enter the host details and the port number along with your username and password. Alternatively just click 'Next' to proceed.



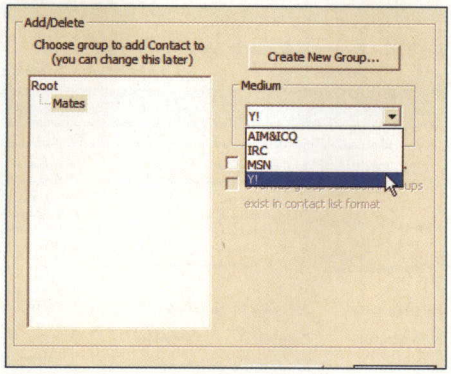
5 Access your accounts

Once you've entered all your account info you're ready to use Trillian. The instant messaging accounts you have are represented by coloured circles at the foot of the interface. To access the account options right-click the corresponding circle.



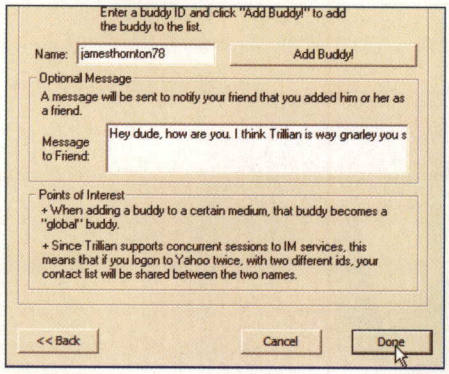
6 Get connected

Choose 'Connection Manager' from the pop-up menu to configure your connection. The account ID and password should be pre-filled, or click on the button below to get a new account. Click the 'Connect' button to sign on to this account.



7 Adding your buddies

One of the great things about Trillian is that it allows you to create separate Buddy lists for each of your IM accounts. Select the Medium from the drop-down list and click 'Create New Group' to add a new group. Now click 'Next'.

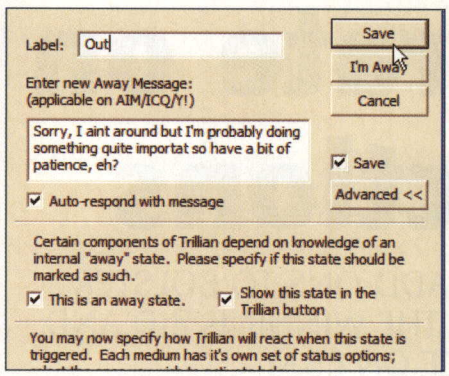

Enter a buddy ID and click "Add Buddy!" to add the buddy to the list.
Name: jamesthornton78
Add Buddy!
Optional Message
A message will be sent to notify your friend that you added him or her as a friend.
Message to Friend:
Hey dude, how are you. I think Trillian is way gnarley you s
Points of Interest
+ When adding a buddy to a certain medium, that buddy becomes a "global" buddy.
+ Since Trillian supports concurrent sessions to IM services, this means that if you logon to Yahoo twice, with two different ids, your contact list will be shared between the two names.
<< Back
Cancel
Done

8 Buddy's song

Now enter the name of the person you wish to add to the Buddy List and click 'Add Buddy'. You can enter an optional message to notify this person that you've added them. When adding a buddy for a certain chat medium, they become a 'global' buddy.

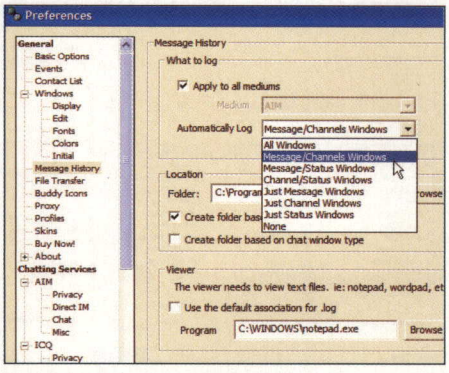
9 Send a message

After adding your buddy you can send them a message just by double-clicking on their name in the Buddy list. Simply type your message in the usual fashion and click 'Send' to fire off the message. Trillian also boasts a decent range of emoticons.


Label: Out
Save
I'm Away
Cancel
Enter new Away Message: (applicable on AIM/ICQ/Y!)
Sorry, I aint around but I'm probably doing something quite importat so have a bit of patience, eh?
Save
Advanced <<
Auto-respond with message
Certain components of Trillian depend on knowledge of an internal "away" state. Please specify if this state should be marked as such.
This is an away state.
Show this state in the Trillian button
You may now specify how Trillian will react when this state is triggered. Each medium has it's own set of status options;

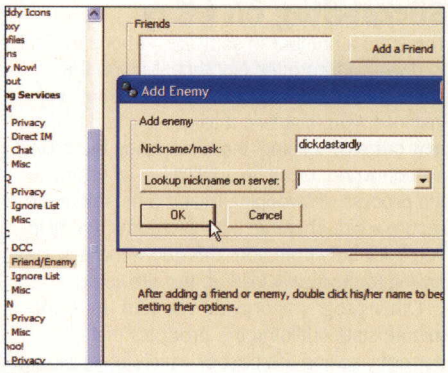
10 Playing away

If you pop away from your PC and don't want people to think you're ignoring them, create a personalised 'away message' by clicking on the 'brb' icon. Enter a label for your message before typing the greeting and choosing the IM accounts to apply it to.



11 History repeating

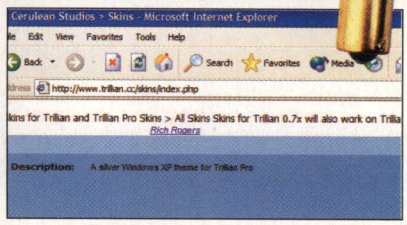
Fancy reliving your hilarious conversations? Trillian comes with a Message History option, available from the Message window. To configure the settings for this option, go to 'Preferences' from the More Options button and select 'Message history'.



12 I h8 u

If there's someone you really don't like talking to on IM, you can take advantage of the Ignore facility operated by most of the instant messaging mediums. IRC even has an Enemy List facility, which can be configured from the Preferences menu.

Power user's tip



ALTHOUGH TRILLIAN'S DEFAULT interface is extremely dashing, there may come a time when you start to get bored with its looks. Fear not, though – like many great Internet applications the instant messaging manager is fully skinnable. To access new themes, select 'Skins' from the Preferences menu and click on the 'Get More Skins' button. Here you can choose from a range of gorgeous skins on the Trillian Web site. You can then initialise the skin by using the 'Skin Chooser' button and restarting the program.

As with a lot of major freeware or shareware applications, the developers of the software are always keen to get you to fork out for the 'professional' version. In Trillian's case, the Pro version is actually worth a look. Just as reliable as version 0.74, Trillian Pro boasts more than 100 new features such as plug-in support, Webcam conferencing capabilities and a sexy System Tray Alert window which fades teasingly in and out on the bottom of your screen. Costing a mere $25 (about £15), this is one of the few shareware upgrades worth considering.

Jargon buster

IRC
Stands for Internet Relay Chat. An online chat system which facilitates real-time conversations via the Net. Based on a text-only environment, each IRC channel begins with a '#' and relates to a particular topic or theme.

Emoticon
A typed sequence of characters that creates a picture of a facial expression. These have been popular with instant messaging users for years and have become increasingly elaborate in recent times.

In brief:
Task: Get to grips with eBay add-ons
Software I need: Most of the programs are on the CD
Difficulty: Easier than going to a car boot sale
Time I need: Depends when the auctions close

Improve your success rate on eBay auctions

USE THESE HANDY AUCTION ADD-ONS TO BOLSTER YOUR CHANCES OF PLACING THE WINNING BID AND SELLING FOR THE RIGHT PRICE ON EBAY

ONCE UPON A time the only way to make a quick buck from your unwanted bric-a-brac was to clear out the contents of your attic and drag it all down to your local car boot sale. Even then you'd struggle to offload most of it, and would probably end up taking tuppence for Mr Potato Head or flogging your old telly for a couple of pounds.

However, since the advent of eBay, people have been fighting back megabucks offers for old Beano annuals, allowing them to make a mint from old tat quickly and easily. Plus, we all know how useful the site can be for picking up some real treasures at bargain prices. The online auction service now lists so many different categories of product, ranging from coins and collectables to cars and computers, that you can find pretty much anything you could ever want through eBay.

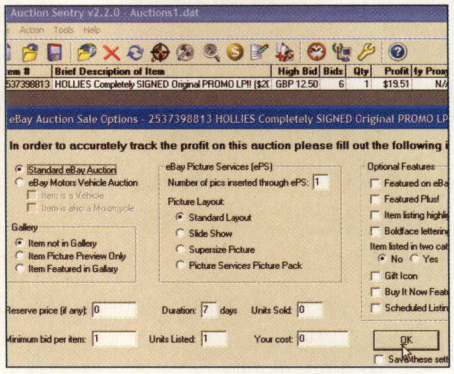
Of course, finding the product you want to buy is the easy part. Beating everyone else to it is another matter entirely, and can prove as irritating as lying in a bath of mosquitoes. There can be few things worse in life than going in to work and bragging to your mates that you're 'this close' to getting a Scalextric set, only to return home and discover you've been gazumped at the last minute by some quick-fingered scoundrel. Never give up hope though, as there are plenty of ways to manage your eBay auctions more effectively, whether you're attempting to seal the purchase of your dreams or want to make sure that the items you list definitely sell.

Succeeding on eBay

There are a number of software add-ons available to download from the Net that give you the power to transform the way you use eBay. For instance, you might want to get involved in the new craze of 'sniping' that's sweeping the online auction world, using an application to automate the process of swooping in at the last minute to secure a bid. There are also programs that help you track bids from your desktop without actually having to physically load up the site yourself.

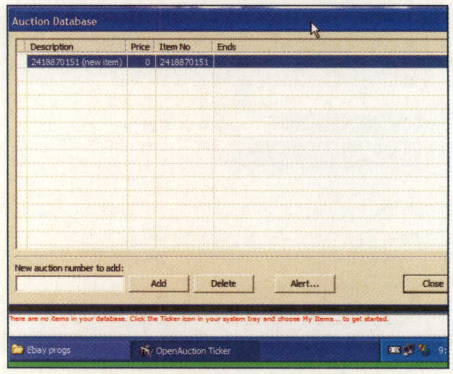
Other programs provide you with up-to-the-minute stats outlining the products that are currently selling the best or which let you create dazzling HTML adverts for your listings, ensuring you market the items you sell more effectively. Check out the eBay add-ons we've outlined here – you'll find most of them on this month's CD. We guarantee they'll all save you time, money and hassle.

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD



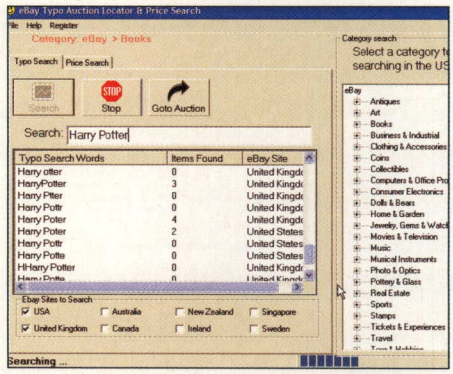
1 Auction Sentry 1.8

There's nothing worse than being pipped at the post for an item on eBay. Auction Sentry helps you track the progress of your bids, and better still, automates your bidding, allowing you to place your bid as close to the end of the auction as possible.



4 OpenAuction Ticker 1.0

Another way of monitoring auctions without accessing the site, OpenAuction Ticker sits at the bottom of the screen, scrolling details of the auction you're watching. Hold the mouse over the ticker, and a pop-up shows the number of bids and ending time.

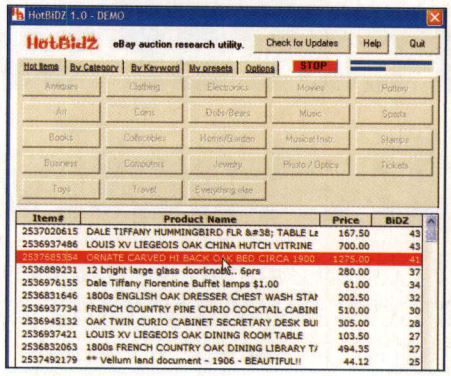


7 eBay Typo Auction Locator

There are thousands of items listed on eBay that go unnoticed due to typing errors. This nifty program helps you sniff out bargains by locating auctions where the seller has misspelled the item for sale, meaning there'll be few or no bids for it.

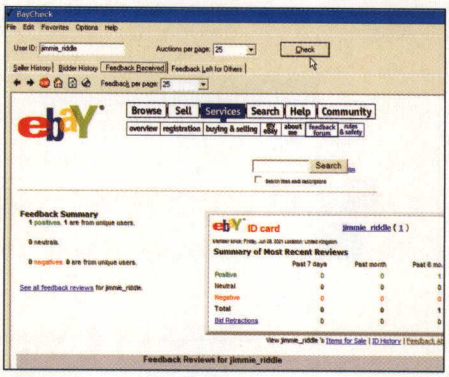
2 eBay Toolbar 3.5.5

Allowing you to keep tabs on goodies up for grabs, this toolbar helps you stay one step ahead. It lets you track the progress of items you've bid on and those you're watching without entering the site itself. Download it from **pages.ebay.com/ebay_toolbar**.



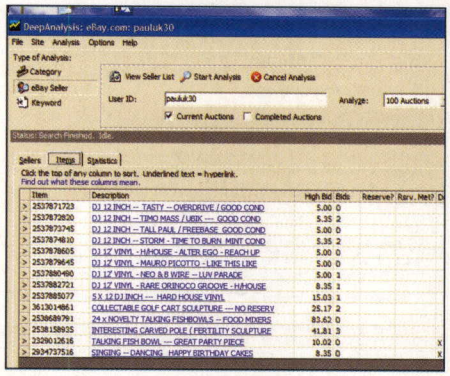
3 HotBidz 1.1a

Before clearing out your attic and flogging it all on eBay, it's a good idea to do a little research to see what sells and what doesn't. This tool lets you hunt for auctions by category or keyword search, and sort them by bids, so you can uncover the hottest items.



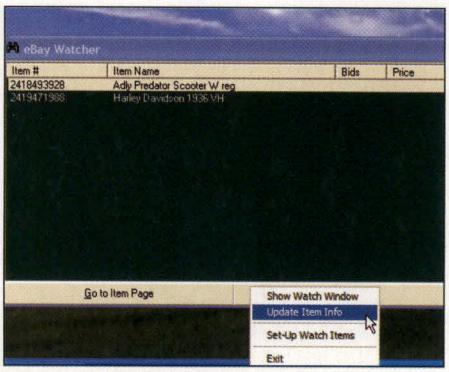
5 BayCheck 2.0

One of the worst things about any auction is getting diddled by a buyer or seller. This lets you run a quick check on an eBay user by entering their ID before retrieving details of seller/bidder history, feedback received and feedback left by others.



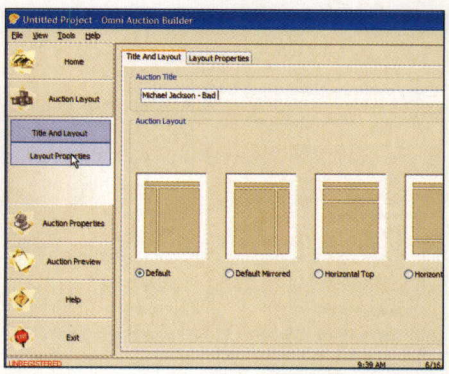
6 DeepAnalysis 1.5

Designed to help you master the art of buying and selling on eBay, this utility provides information about any market sector on the site. It gives you info on the items with bids, the sellers who listed the items, and comprehensive stats about items and sellers.



8 eBay Watcher 1.0

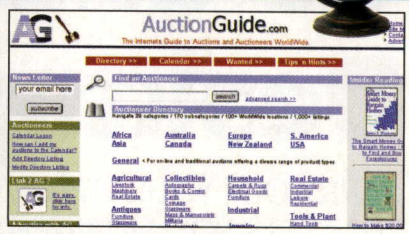
How many times have you got excited about stealing the bargain of the century on eBay, only to find on returning that it was snapped up by some other bidder? eBay Watcher lets you view the status of auctions at any time by entering the auction ID.



9 eBay Auction Builder 2.1

If you fancy adding a bit more oomph to your auctions, this could be the program for you. It lets you create your own professional-looking auctions for eBay, selecting from a range of HTML templates, or creating your own via the layout and design tools.

Web resources



Auction Guide

www.auctionguide.com

The definitive directory for all things auction-related, this guide comes with a handy Auction Software section where you'll find details of a wide range of programs that help make your auctioneering easier and more effective. There's also a great Auction Calendar, allowing you to fill your diary with details of upcoming auctions.

ebay.co.uk
The UK's Online Marketplace
Browse | Sell | Services | Search | Help | Community
new users, click here!
what are you looking for?
Categories
Gadget Heaven

eBay

www.ebay.co.uk

As the world's most popular auction site, eBay is a great place to go for pretty much anything you want. One of the most useful add-ons we've featured here, the eBay Toolbar, can be downloaded from the site.

Jargon buster

Sniping

The name given to the process of using an automated piece of software to steal in at the very last minute to win an auction. While not outlawed by auction sites, it's a process that often infuriates users, as it's almost impossible to defeat snipers without resorting to the same tactics.

Proxy bidding

A service provided by many auction sites whereby you can specify a confidential maximum bid on the site. The auction service will then automatically increase the bid to maintain the high bid, and the proxy bidding will stop when the bid has been won or if the limit of the proxy bid has been reached.

In brief:
Task: Spy on people using your machine
Software I need: Desktop Detective 2000 Pro Edition
Difficulty: Dead easy
Time I need: Around 15 minutes

Go undercover with Desktop Detective

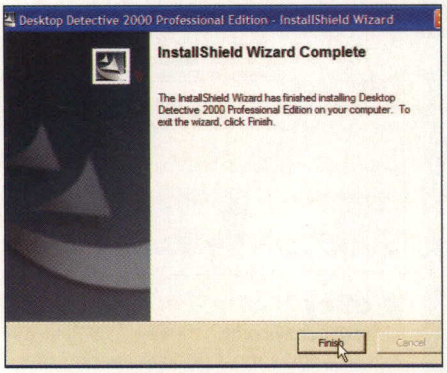
Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

CARRY OUT YOUR OWN COVERT COMPUTER OPERATIONS WITH THIS CHEEKY SOFTWARE THAT LETS YOU MONITOR WHAT GOES ON WHEN YOU'RE AWAY FROM YOUR MACHINE

SOME PEOPLE CAN get really suspicious when someone else uses their machine – and that's just the *PI* staff! The danger is that your guest could decide to rifle through your confidential data or even use your Net connection for sleazy purposes. These days most people know the tricks to cover their tracks, but there are more cunning ways to catch them in the act.

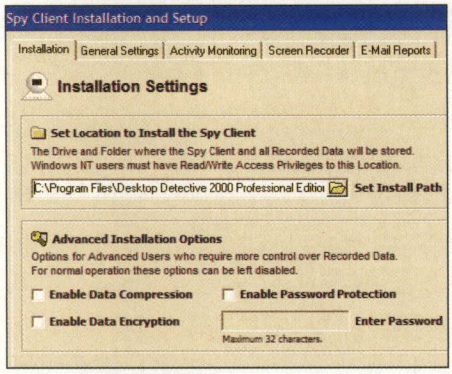
This may seem a bit drastic, but if you feel the need to keep tabs on your machine, we're here to offer a solution. Desktop Detective 2000 is a particularly useful package because it bundles up some of the most popular monitoring tools.

Loading on startup, it sits in the background and watches silently. Keystrokes and Web histories are logged in special report files, while screen dumps are captured periodically. There's also provision for snooping online calls or login data, and everything is really easy to configure. What's more, you can even request that the program sends its revealing reports to an external email address. The surprise is just how unnoticed the program goes, so don't be shocked if you end up spying on yourself!


Desktop Detective 2000 Professional Edition - InstallShield Wizard
InstallShield Wizard Complete
The InstallShield Wizard has finished installing Desktop Detective 2000 Professional Edition on your computer. To exit the wizard, click Finish.
Finish
Cancel

1 Install Desktop Detective

Launch the step-by-step installer and accept the licence agreements. Unless otherwise desired, use the default path for the program files, and the software will be unpacked. You should be given a message confirming success before clicking 'Finish'.

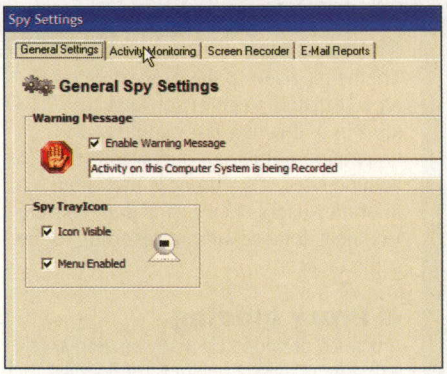

Spy Client Installation and Setup
Installation
General Settings
Activity Monitoring
Screen Recorder
E-Mail Reports
Installation Settings
Set Location to Install the Spy Client
The Drive and Folder where the Spy Client and all Recorded Data will be stored. Windows NT users must have Read/Write Access Privileges to this Location.
C:\Program Files\Desktop Detective 2000 Professional Editio
Set Install Path
Advanced Installation Options
Options for Advanced Users who require more control over Recorded Data. For normal operation these options can be left disabled.
Enable Data Compression
Enable Password Protection
Enable Data Encryption
Enter Password
Maximum 32 characters.

2 Setting it up

The first time you use the program you must install the secret Spy Client. Click 'Install Spy' on the main dashboard and a dialog appears. Here you must specify the installation location and define a password if necessary, before clicking the 'Install Spy' button.

3 Connect to a client

The controller application must be connected to a Spy Client for it to work. Click 'Connect' on the main dashboard, select 'Connect to Local Spy Client' and 'Connect to Spy'. Desktop Detective does allow you to remotely access other networked clients.

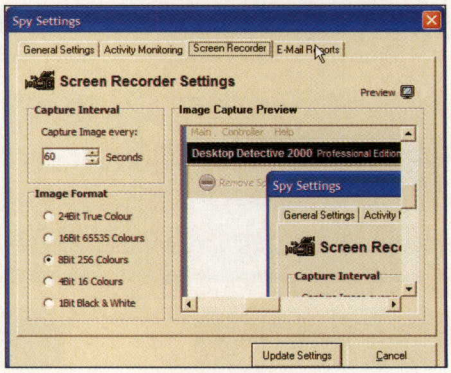


4 Adjust your settings

Configure the Monitoring options by clicking 'Settings'. A tabbed dialog will prompt for 'General Settings' by default. This lets you remove or define a warning message at startup and set tray icon options. Hit the 'next' tab to move on.

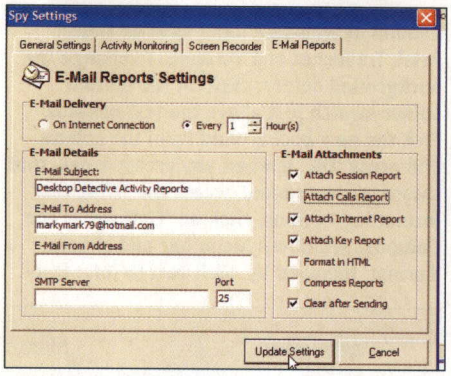
5 Activity monitoring

The next settings relate to what sort of monitoring actions will be performed. You can select to spy on log-in sessions, online calls and network connections. We want to initialise Screen and Keyboard Capture, Web Page Tracking and Email Reports.



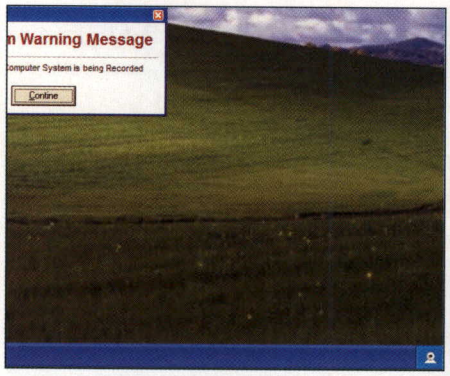
6 Screen Recorder

The Screen Recorder settings let you specify the rate of each capture in seconds and the image resolution. You probably won't want the intervals to be too rapid, so 60 seconds will do, but try to lower the 'Image Format' scale so picture files aren't too big.



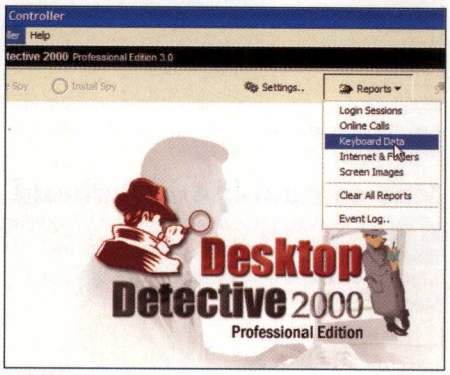
7 Email Reports

A neat feature of the program lets you forward monitoring reports to an email address. You can set messages to be sent periodically or on connection, but you'll need to supply a valid address. Select which reports you wish to send and click 'Update Settings'.



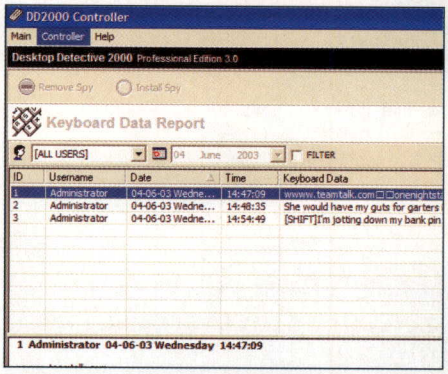
8 Restart your PC

Restarting the PC runs the Spy Client, and if you've set the Icon option in the Settings dialog you'll see a blinking camera in the system tray. You'll also see a pop-up message warning that the machine is monitored. The program's now recording every move.



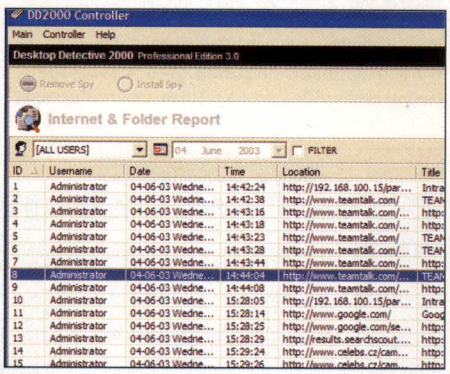
9 Reports

When you want to check what has been recorded, open up the Controller window. You'll need to connect to the Spy Client, and hit the 'Reports' dashboard button. A menu offers all the main monitoring actions, so click one to read a report.



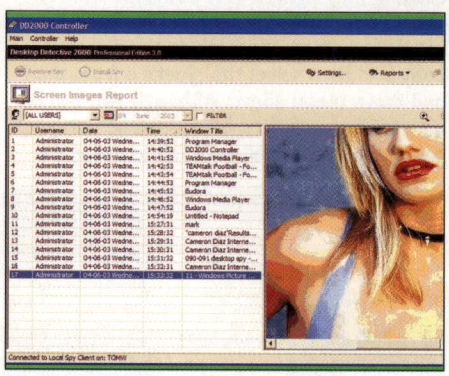
10 What's been pressed?

The Keystroke Logger registers all typing within any app. Logged in chunks, the reports can be combined by clicking the 'View All Text' button, but they can be tough to decipher, as typos and function keys are included. Reports can be saved or printed.



11 Looking back

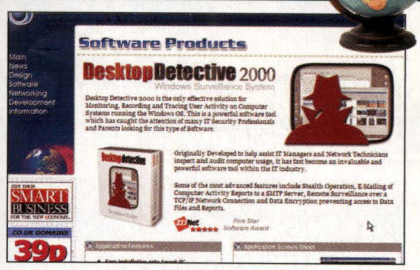
It's no longer safe to just delete your browser history, as Desktop Detective records where you've been online. The Internet & Folders Report lists URLs and disk directories visited chronologically. A 'View Selected Location' button also links you to any page.



12 What's all this then?

Images can be captured of the whole desktop or by app, and can be previewed on the Reports page. Click an item on the list and the picture will appear in the window opposite. Zoom tools are provided so you can have a good look at what's gone on.

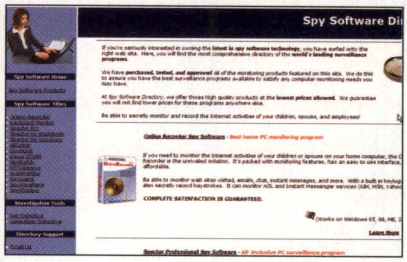
Web resources



Bitlogic Software

www.bitlogic.co.uk/detective.htm

This is the official developer's home page for Desktop Detective. Here you can gather some more information about the package and even contact the makers. You can also register your limited free trial and purchase the full version.



Spy Software Directory

www.spy-software-directory.com

If your thirst for undercover surveillance remains unquenched, give this site a try. It's a lengthy directory of computer snooping software for a multitude of purposes. Organised into types of app, programs are explained with accompanying screenshots.

Power users' tip

ONE OF THE neat things about Desktop Detective is that it comes in two parts. When you first install the program it actually only unpacks the Administrator suite, which is basically a remote controller for the Spy module. It's the module that runs behind the desktop and performs the monitoring, which the controller then connects to. What this means is that the controller application does not need to remain static or be stored in one place. Therefore if you imagine the controller to be like a key for setting the program options and accessing the Spy's reports, you could carry it around on a disk. This would prevent anyone you are monitoring from using the controller to switch the program off or delete incriminating reports.

GOT CONNECTION PROBLEMS? EMAIL **DANNY MCALEER** AT **HELPDESK@PARAGON.CO.UK**. HE'LL CURE YOUR BROWSING ILLS

Don't be afraid of the monster – you can format your email any way you like in Mozilla

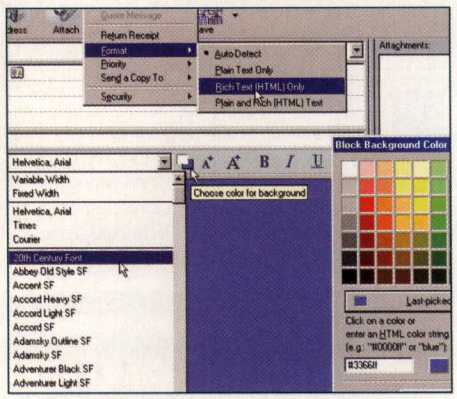
Setting new defaults

Q I was wondering if you could explain how to do something I have not been able to achieve in Mozilla Mail. This also applies to the Netscape mail client, I believe. Is it possible to set new defaults for fonts, and text and background colour when composing new mail? I've done it in Outlook and Incredimail, but can't find a way to in Mozilla Mail. Also, why are there so few fonts to choose from? Is there any way to expand the list of available fonts? Apart from the odd Web page not displaying quite as it did in IE, I'm quite impressed with Mozilla, and I would urge anyone with a sense of adventure to give it a shot.

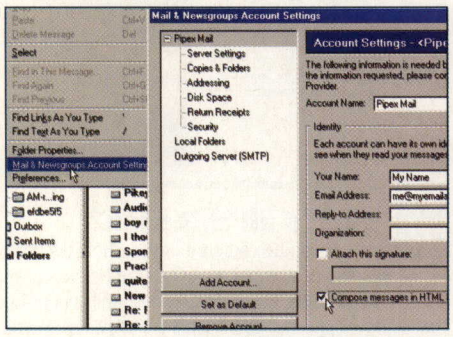
Simon Reeve

A **Just like Outlook Express and Incredimail, it is possible to write your messages as HTML mail and thus gain access to additional fonts, change background colours and even embed images and other Web page elements. Click on the 'Edit' menu and choose 'Mail & Newsgroups Accounts Settings...'. In the first section you'll find a checkbox labelled 'Compose messages in HTML format'. Make sure this option is ticked.**

Now when you click on 'New Message' from the File menu (or when you reply to an existing message), a new Compose window should open with the font and background settings enabled. Click inside the message body and then select the typeface from the pull-down menu above. Although you will be able to choose any typeface installed on your computer, try to limit yourself to using the handful of Web-safe fonts such as Times, Arial, Trebuchet and Verdana. To change the background colour, click on the bottom colour swatch just above the text window. Pick the new background from the palette and press 'OK'. If when you create a new mail message, you cannot access the HTML text formatting options, click on 'Options' in the Compose window's menu bar and choose 'Format' followed by 'Rich Text (HTML) Only'.



Each time you create a new mail message you can choose whether to use plain or rich text



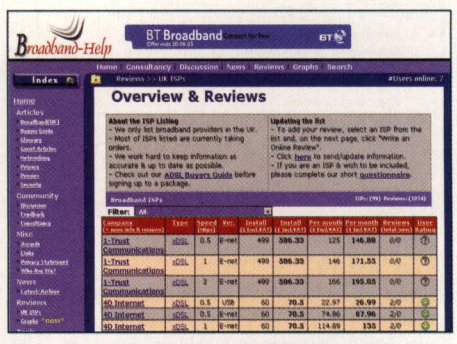
Set up your Mozilla mail account so that it uses HTML mail by default

Mac-compatible broadband

Q I saw your review of ISPs in May's edition of *Practical Internet*. Can you tell me which broadband services are compatible with Mac OSX v10.2?

Jonathan Wood

A **You'll find that the software supplied with most of the more popular choices of broadband vendors supports the latest version of Mac OS. These include BT's numerous broadband packages (www.bt.com/broadband), Virgin.net (www.virgin.net) – although you'll need a PC to register initially – and NTL (www.ntl.com) if it's available in your area. A couple of useful Web sites to visit are Broadband-Help at www.broadband-help.com, and ADSLguide (www.adslguide.org.uk). Both sites offer vast**



For a comprehensive list of broadband vendors in the UK, including which ones support which operating systems, go to www.broadband-help.com

databases of almost all the UK broadband vendors, and include user reviews, prices, links to the sites and a breakdown of the services offered. Best of all, both are specific to the UK, and only list services that you could potentially use without requiring some whizzo satellite system and connecting via space to a shed-based server somewhere in the Baltic states.

Invisible images

Q Sometimes when I'm browsing various sites in Internet Explorer 6, none of the images will load. I've tried refreshing the page, and even tried to load each picture individually by right-clicking on them and choosing 'Show Picture', but nothing happens. Have I set something incorrectly in Internet Explorer? I checked that the Display Images box is ticked. It can't be that every site I've visited has broken picture links.

Tracey Ingham

A **This anomaly is definitely peculiar only to Internet Explorer 6. Some folk have suggested, though there is no official word from Microsoft, that it's caused by the fact that certain revisions of IE6 (and to a lesser extent, 5.5) cannot properly display JPEG images that contain embedded XML-encoded data in them. This data includes preview information and colour profiles, which Photoshop 7 and some other image-editing applications save in the JPEG file header.**

When Internet Explorer encounters one of these pictures, it gets stuck trying to load it, and while you can still happily roam around and view other pages, no further images will load, even on another site. The only solution seems to be either to clear your Temporary Internet files and restart the browser, or if it persists, to restart Windows. But this may not work under all circumstances.

Unfortunately, as you've pointed out, this is one of those intermittent problems, where some days it will work fine, even on the same site that refused to work a day before, and other times it will refuse point-blank to show a single image. As a consequence it's very difficult to apportion responsibility to one particular program or setting, apart from IE itself. If it becomes unbearably frustrating, you might want to try installing an alternative Web browser as a backup. Or perhaps running Windows Update and downloading any hot-fixes for XP (or updates if you're running 98) will solve the problem. You might also want to try temporarily disabling your virus protection software or firewall if you have either installed, since many users have said this helped to alleviate their image-loading troubles.

Plug-in problem

Q When I first encountered Flash on a Web site, it prompted me to download the plug-in. That was ages ago now. Since then I've tried to look at a friend's site which uses Flash, but there's just a blank space where his movie should be on the page. He reckons my plug-in needs updating, but surely Internet Explorer would give me the same warning message? Do I really need to update it, and where do I get it from? The last time it was all automatic and I paid no attention to it.

Pete McDonald

A **It does sound as if the Flash content you're trying to view requires a later version of the plug-in. Unfortunately, there are occasions when a previous installation of** →

Transferring your Outlook Express inbox

Q I have just bought a new PC and now have the fun task of copying over all my files, settings and programs from the old machine.

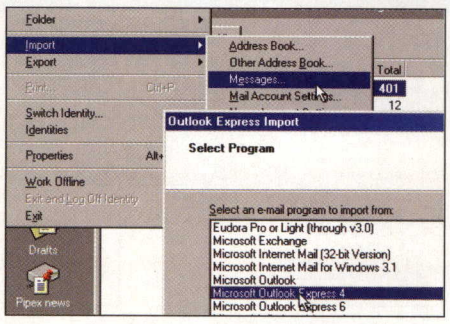
While I've managed to back up most things as I've gone along, I have no idea how to back up my email messages (except for saving them individually, which is taking forever), or if it's even possible to copy them from one machine to another.

My old computer has Windows 98 running Outlook Express 5, and the new one has XP with Outlook Express 6 already set up on it. Can I still copy my mailboxes across? And if so, how do I go about it?

John Brackley

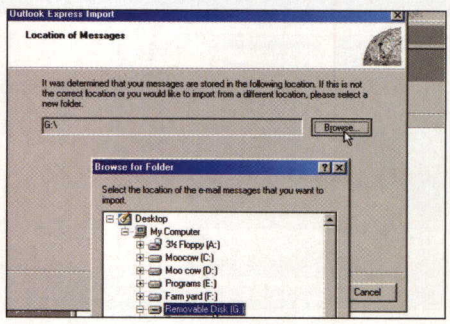
A **It doesn't matter what version of Windows you're transferring to or from, or even if the source of your mailboxes is from an older version of Outlook Express. You can still copy them to your new computer. We're assuming that you have some kind of backup media, whether it's a Zip drive or CD-recordable device.**

The first thing to do is find the location of your Outlook Express folders. To do this, click on the 'Tools' menu and choose 'Options'. In the Options dialog switch to the 'Maintenance' tab and press the 'Store Folder' button. Copy this location to the clipboard (press 'CTRL' and 'C'), then open an Explorer window. Paste the location into the 'Address' bar, press 'Return' and you should find all your Outlook Express mailbox files. Copy these to your backup media. You're now ready to import these mailboxes onto your new computer.



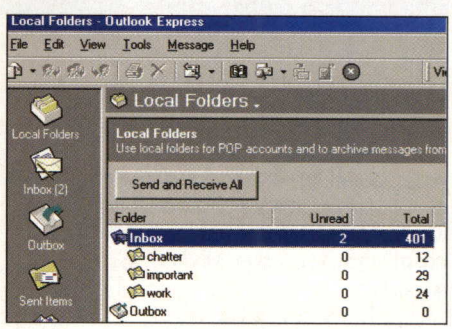
1 Start the Import wizard

Open Outlook Express on your new PC, and click the 'File' menu. Choose 'Import' followed by 'Messages'. In the first step, scroll down the list until you find the version of Outlook Express you're importing from. Select it and press 'Next'.


Outlook Express Import
Location of Messages
It was determined that your messages are stored in the following location. If this is not the correct location or you would like to import from a different location, please select a new folder.
G:\
Browse...
Browse for Folder
Select the location of the e-mail messages that you want to import.
Desktop
My Computer
3½ Floppy (A:)
Moocow (C:)
Moo cow (D:)
Programs (E:)
Farm yard (F:)
Removable Disk (G:)
Cancel

2 Find your backup

In the next step you need to pick the location of the mail boxes you want to import, so make sure your Zip disc or CD is ready. Press 'Browse', and use the Folder view to find and locate your backup files. Select the drive or folder and press 'OK'.



3 Import your mailboxes

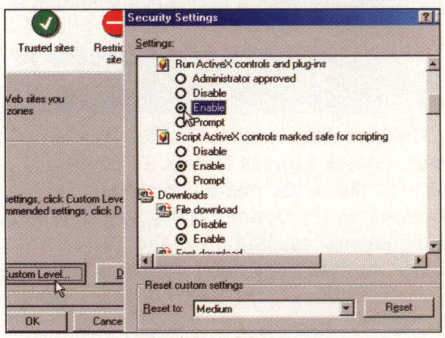
Click on the 'Next' button. If the archive contains all the necessary files and isn't in use by another application, Outlook Express will import them all into the same Inbox, Sent Items and Outbox as you had configured in your old email software.

the Flash plug-in hampers any automatic updating on demand. And sometimes the site's detection routine is poorly written (it searches for the plug-in and sends you off to Macromedia for an update if it isn't found or the plug-in is out of date), which is probably the reason you aren't getting any prompting from Internet Explorer. This can be remedied, though.

First of all, uninstall the plug-in. To do this you need to download a small applet from the Macromedia Web site: download.macromedia.com/pub/flash/ts/uninstall_flash_player.exe. Download this to your desktop, close all your browser windows, and then launch the uninstaller. Next, go back to the Macromedia site to: www.macromedia.com/shockwave/download/frameset.fhtml?P1_Prod_Version=Shockwave Flash, and choose the option to install the latest Flash plug-in (it's now up to version 6,0,79,0). You might need to restart Windows in order for it to take effect.

Should this not remedy the problem, and you still see either a picture placeholder icon, or nothing at all where the Flash movie should be, the cause is likely to be Internet Explorer's security settings. In IE, open the 'Internet Options' dialog from the Tools menu, and click on the 'Security' tab. Set the security level slider to 'Medium: Default Level'. If you've customised your security settings, push the 'Custom Level...' button and check that both 'Download Signed ActiveX Controls' and 'Run ActiveX Controls and Plug-ins' are not set to 'Disabled'. Either 'Enable' or 'Prompt' should be fine.

Of course, this is assuming you're using Internet Explorer. If you're using Netscape, you must make sure that you have version 6.2 or better. The Flash plug-in is not supported for versions 6.0 or 6.1 (although all v4.x revisions will work).



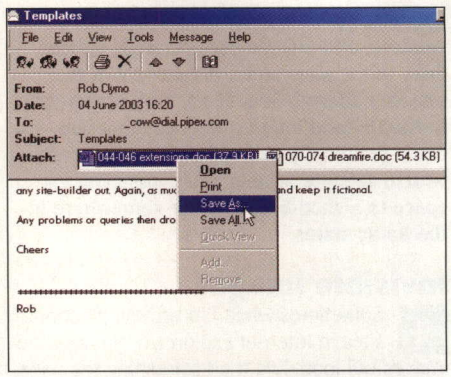
Your ActiveX security settings may prohibit you from viewing Flash movies in Internet Explorer

Don't say a Word

Q Every time I try to open a Word document sent via email, an error message appears saying it can't open the file. I removed the virus-checking possibilities from Norton, but still it does not work. I was using Microsoft Office XP for students, then I tried switching to Office 2000, but it still can't open the files. It always says I should check the path and makes sure it's correct. Do you have any solutions?

Nsabasi Etteh

A Assuming that nothing has gone awry with the attachment, there is another way to open a Word file attached to an email. Rather than open the document from the email window directly, try instead to save it to your desktop or another location on your hard drive. To do this, right-click on the icon in the Attach box and choose 'Save as...' from the pop-up menu. Now, rather than double-click on the document's icon, start Word, click on the 'File' menu and choose 'Open...'. Use the File Selector to browse for and then load the document. If this still doesn't work, ask the sender to save the document in another format, such as RTF, or to compress the Word document into a Zip file.



If you're having trouble opening a Word file attachment, save it to disk rather than trying to view it directly from Outlook Express

Getting rid of the error box

Q Unlike some people, I actually like the latest version of Internet Explorer. Except for one thing: that patronising error-reporting dialog box that pops up when IE flops over. It doesn't happen often, but I'd like to get rid of it if at all possible. Can it be done, or do I have to put up with it?

Bill Morgan

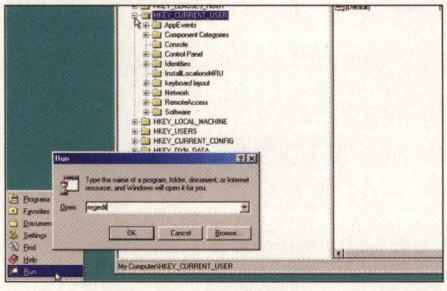
A This error-reporting tool is not only included in IE6, but updated versions of 5.x too. It is a bit annoying, on a par with railway announcers apologising for delays to your service. But yes, it can be removed. It does involve a little meddling with the Registry, though. So, click on the 'Start' button and choose 'Run...'. In the prompt,

Editing Registry settings

Q I would very much like to try the Fullscreen mode tip in a previous article on Internet Explorer, but after several hours of finding out how to open the Registry, the word 'Console' is missing, and when I click on HKEY_CURRENT_USER, I find 'Default' and 'Value not set'. For me, that's a brick wall. There is no way I can modify 'Fullscreen', as Fullscreen doesn't exist. I am using Windows 98.

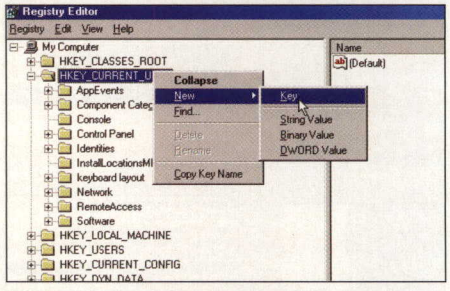
Norman Beck

A Microsoft hid the Registry to prevent idle fingers doing silly stuff to the Operating System. However, it's easy to find, once you know how. The second part of your problem is not having any keys or values already set. But you can always make one. Here's how...



1 Open the Registry

Click the 'Start' button and choose 'Run...' from the pop-up menu. In the dialog type 'regedit' (without the quotes) and press 'OK'. This will start the Registry. On the left, find the HKEY_CURRENT_USER key and click the plus symbol to expand it.

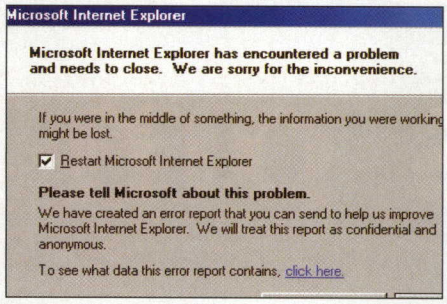


2 Create a new key

Find the 'Console' key underneath it, and highlight it. If no Console key exists right-click on HKEY_CURRENT_USER and choose 'New' followed by 'Key' from the pop-up menu. Call this new key 'Console'. Select it and right-click in the right panel.

enter 'regedit' and press 'OK' to load the Registry. Flip down the list of keys until you find the following: HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\Main\. In here you should find a DWORD value called IEWatsonEnabled. If this is set to 1, or there is no IEWatsonEnabled value, it means that the error-reporting feature is enabled.

Double-click on the value if it exists and set it to '0'. If this value does not exist in this Registry key, right-click inside the right-hand panel and choose 'New' followed by 'DWORD Value'. Enter the aforementioned value name, taking care to copy the capitalisation, and make sure it has a value of '0' (shown as 0x00000000). This won't stop IE crashing, but it will revert your computer back to the default error handler instead of that meddling report dialog box.


Microsoft Internet Explorer
Microsoft Internet Explorer has encountered a problem and needs to close. We are sorry for the inconvenience.
If you were in the middle of something, the information you were working might be lost.
Restart Microsoft Internet Explorer
Please tell Microsoft about this problem.
We have created an error report that you can send to help us improve Microsoft Internet Explorer. We will treat this report as confidential and anonymous.
To see what data this error report contains, click here.

With a single Registry tweak, you need never see this error-handling dialog again

I want my FTP

Q I used to use Internet Explorer to FTP stuff to and from my Web server. I found it much easier than using a dedicated FTP program, because you can just drag files into the window to upload them. Since then I've had to reinstall Windows and so I decided to upgrade to IE6 at the same time. Now when I try to log on to my server, I keep getting the 'Page cannot be displayed' error. I know my FTP details are right, and I've tried logging on to my Web space using an FTP program, and that worked. Is this feature not included in IE6? I'm using Windows 98.

Hal Lawrence

A The Graphical FTP Helper shell extension, which is what you need to use IE as an FTP client, is not part of the IE6 installer – contrary to the description in the setup application. So if you don't have the Graphic FTP or Web Folders option installed from a previous version, you can't use it, and you'll get the Page Not Found error. While later versions of Windows have this component installed in the system itself, the first edition of Windows 98 doesn't have the all-important Msieftp.dll file and its associated paraphernalia.

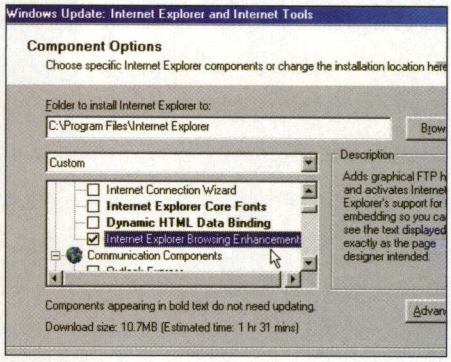
There is a workaround, but it's not pleasant. First you must uninstall IE6 and revert to the previous version (IE4/5) of the browser you had installed on your clean system. Open the Control Panel and double-click 'Add/Remove Programs'. Scroll down the list of installed applications until you get to Microsoft IE6 and Internet Tools. Select this plus 'Add/Remove...'. In the next dialog, select 'Restore the previous Windows configuration' and press 'OK'. Internet Explorer's setup program should start in Maintenance mode. Press 'OK' when prompted to restore the previous version of IE.

Now restart your PC. If all is well, you should be back to version 4 or 5. If you still have version 6 installed, you need to reinstall Windows. If you do this, first rename the file 'iemigrat.dll' to 'iemigrat.xxx' so the Windows installer knows to restore your old IE version.

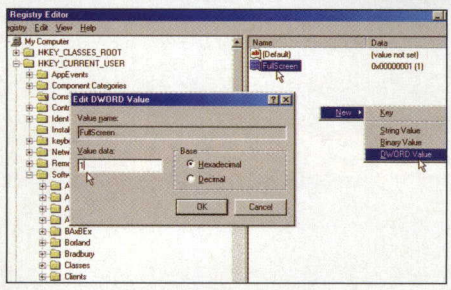
You should now be able to run the IE5.5 installer and choose 'Install Custom or Minimal'. In here, check that 'Internet Explorer Browsing Enhancements' is ticked before continuing. Now try connecting to your FTP server using your browser. If the FTP Helper works, start re-installing IE6 over the top.

However, before fiddling with your browser installation, check that the option is simply not switched off. Open the Control Panel and double-click 'Internet Options'. Click 'Advanced' and scroll down the list of Browsing options. Ensure that 'Use Web-based FTP or Enable Folder View for FTP sites' is ticked.

If you still can't connect to your FTP server using IE, re-open the 'Advanced' section of the Internet Options Control Panel, and remove the tick from the option to 'Show Friendly HTTP error messages'. This will force IE to seek Authentication, so you can enter your username and password and login. Without this IE will send anonymous credentials to see if a connection can be established, which won't work with your password-protected Web space.

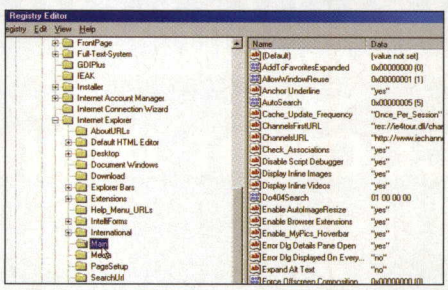

Windows Update: Internet Explorer and Internet Tools
Component Options
Choose specific Internet Explorer components or change the installation location here
Folder to install Internet Explorer to:
C:\Program Files\Internet Explorer
Brow
Custom
Description
Internet Connection Wizard
Internet Explorer Core Fonts
Dynamic HTML Data Binding
Internet Explorer Browsing Enhancement
Communication Components
Components appearing in bold text do not need updating.
Download size: 10.7MB (Estimated time: 1 hr 31 mins)

The IE6 installation is deceptive. It might say that the Internet Explorer Browsing Enhancements option is going to be installed, but there's nothing in it...



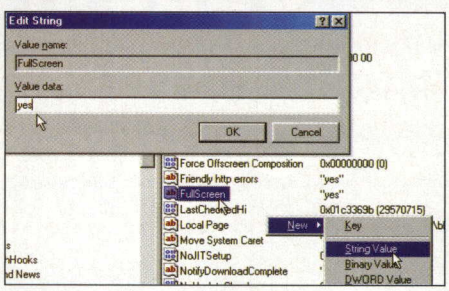
3 Make a new value

Select 'New' followed by 'DWORD Value' in the pop-up menu. Call this new value 'FullScreen' (observe the capitalisation), then double-click on it. In the dialog box, enter the value '1' in the Value Data field. Press 'OK'.



4 Search through the keys

Scroll down the list on the left until you find 'Software' and expand it to open 'Microsoft' followed by 'Internet Explorer' and finally 'Main'. The path at the bottom should read: HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\InternetExplorer\Main.



5 Create your own

Once again, look in the right-hand panel. If there is no Fullscreen value present, right-click and select 'New' followed by 'String'. Call your new String value 'Fullscreen' and double-click on it. Enter 'yes' in the dialog box and press 'OK'. Restart Windows.

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Your Business Online

EXPERT ADVICE ON CREATING PROFITABLE SMALL BUSINESSES

Welcome...

THE PUSH TO attract customers is always paramount within any company, and business owners quite rightly spend much time making sure that they keep a regular flow of new custom coming into their firm.

This isn't much use if you can't keep people coming back to you, though. The old adage that it costs much more to find a new customer than it does to keep an existing one is very true. A decent customer support setup is vital to any company that's keen to keep their visitors coming back for more time and time again. Have a read at Cindy Duffield's feature on that very subject – it makes very interesting reading for anyone who needs to keep their customers happy.

Thomas Watson, Editor
thomas@paragon.co.uk

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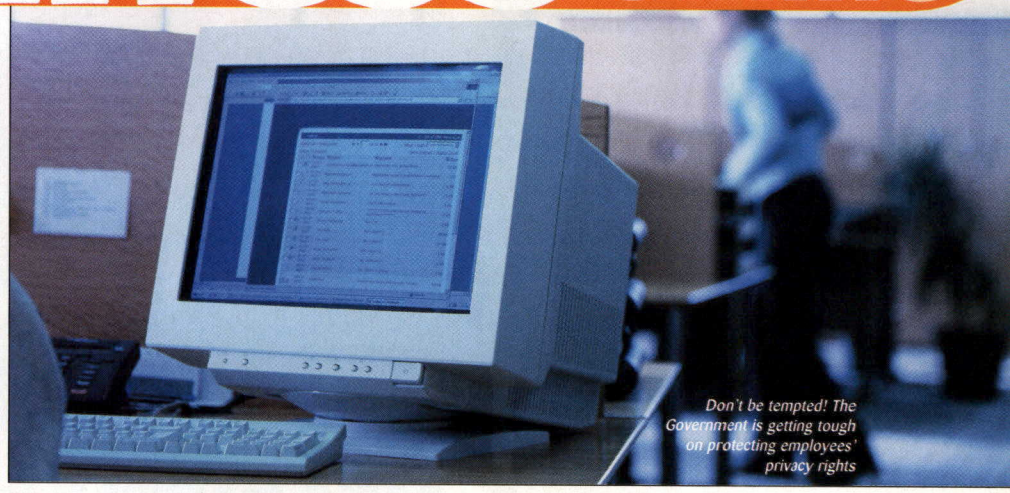


Don't be tempted! The Government is getting tough on protecting employees' privacy rights

Employers risk court action for email snooping

PRYING ON WHAT YOUR STAFF ARE TALKING ABOUT COULD LAND YOU IN BIG TROUBLE

IF YOU SNEAK a look at what your employees are talking about on email, you could end up feeling the long arm of the law on your shoulder.

The Government plans to get tough on prying bosses, warning employers that they could be prosecuted if they spy on workers' emails and phone calls without their knowledge.

According to the Employment Practices Data Protection Code, intrusive monitoring will need to be justified, and in virtually all cases staff will have to be informed when they are being listened to or watched.

> **"SOME WORKPLACES HAVE COME TO RESEMBLE TELEVISION'S BIG BROTHER" BRENDAN BARBER**

The code applies to a range of monitoring techniques including opening emails, listening to voicemail, checking Net usage and CCTV surveillance. It explains how businesses should comply with the Data Protection Act, promoting respect for Article 8 of the Human Rights Act, which spells out the right to respect for personal correspondence.

Information Commissioner Richard Thomas warns: "Employers may have alternative ways of meeting these requirements but if they do nothing they risk breaking the law."

In order to raise awareness of workers' right to privacy, the TUC has launched an online guide to monitoring and surveillance in the workplace on its working life site, which you'll find at **www.worksmart.org.uk**. The guide is designed to provide advice on the implications for employees of the Government's new code.

"With advances in monitoring technology, some workplaces have come to resemble television's Big Brother," says Brendan Barber, TUC General Secretary.

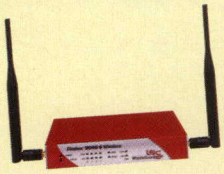
"Workers do have rights to privacy, but they need to be aware of them in order to stand up for them. Staff, unions and employers need to arrive at a solution which balances business needs with the right to individual privacy."

The WorkSMART site provides employees with advice on how to find out if their boss has been snooping on them, whether they are allowed to listen to their voicemail or open their email while they're away, and offers advice on what to do if their boss threatens disciplinary action for forwarding inappropriate emails.

News in brief

→ Watch out

Paranoid businesses can now safeguard their wireless connection following the launch of a new firewall solution aimed at SMEs. The Firebox SOHO 6 Wireless product line from Watchguard is designed to provide a complete, robust wireless and scalable wired security solution in a single firewall appliance. The package features an integrated 802.11b Wireless Access Point, four-port LAN 10/100 switch and remote management capabilities. More information is available at **www.watchguard.com.**



→ Big spenders

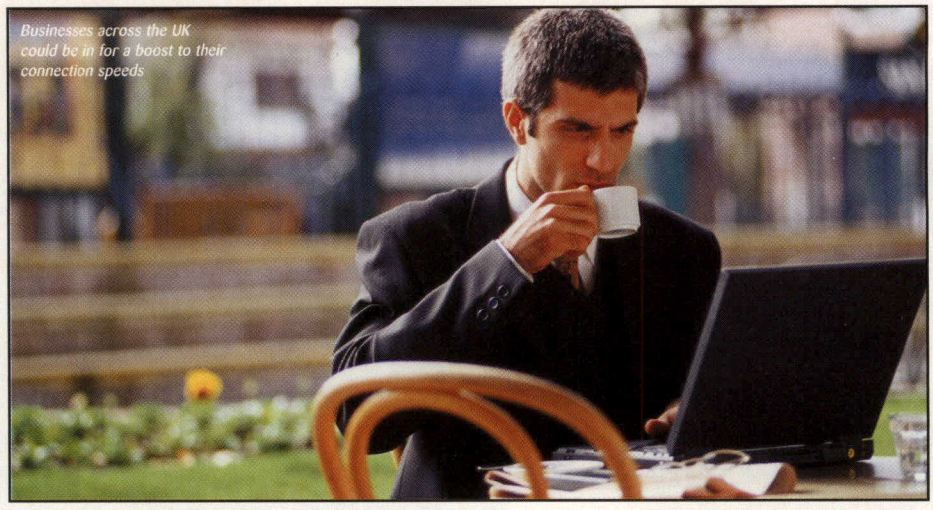
British Net users are buying roughly £2 billion worth of goods online every month. A survey by the Royal Bank of Scotland reveals that the average British adult spends just over £86 online, with CDs, DVDs and videos topping the list of items purchased via the Web. Interestingly, nearly a quarter (22 percent) of women respondents claim to have bought groceries or wine online, compared to only 10 percent of men.

→ Talking shop

Amazon (**www.amazon.co.uk**) plans to pass its extensive wisdom on to up-and-coming online retailers by providing Web site services and technology for businesses looking to launch their own online stores. The company's technology is already being used to power Web-based ordering systems for the likes of Target and Toys 'R' Us. Now, according to Reuters, the online giant expects business for its new subsidiary, Amazon Services, to 'keep getting bigger' as it draws more retailers who want to sell their wares on the Web.

→ Taxing issue

eBay has begun charging VAT to its army of sellers, risking growth at one of its best performing units. New EU legislation requires Net firms operating in Western Europe to charge VAT on all services and products sold from their sites in an attempt to level the playing field between overseas businesses and their European rivals. As a result, eBay has restructured the fees it charges vendors, which amounts to up to five percent of the final sale price, to include VAT.



Businesses across the UK could be in for a boost to their connection speeds

Breakthrough for wireless broadband

GOVERNMENT OFFLOADS WIRELESS LICENCES PROMISING IMPROVED CONNECTIVITY FOR DSL-STARVED BRITISH BUSINESSES

BUSINESSES WHO ARE currently unable to get broadband could be in store for a boost to their connection speeds, after three companies were given the green light to develop wireless broadband access in the UK.

The Government finally auctioned off the 3.4GHz radio spectrum reserved for wireless broadband following several years of trying, and hopes it will increase the availability of high-speed access.

Three firms snapped up the 15 regional licences for the data-carrying radio waves, which cover most of Britain. Hong Kong-based telecoms company Pacific Century Cyberworks captured 13 of the licences, with Red Spectrum winning the Northern England licence and Public Hub capturing the licence covering the South.

The Department of Trade and Industry, which conducted the auction, heralded it a success, pointing out that it could usher in a new era in wireless connectivity which can only be good for broadband-starved firms.

"I am delighted with the outcome of the auction," enthused eCommerce Minister Stephen Timms. "With all 15 licences sold, this is another important step in making the UK the most extensive and competitive market for broadband in the G7."

He added: "The aim of the auction was to see the licences in the hands of the operators best able to take advantage of them, and in turn, to see consumers – including those in areas currently without ADSL or cable – benefit from fixed wireless broadband access."

Domain name scams on the rise

RENEWAL ADVICE EMAIL IS REVEALED AS MONKEY BIZNESS BY LEADING REGISTRY FIRM

DOMAIN NAME HOLDERS are being warned to ignore an unsolicited email reminding them to renew their .biz name, after it was revealed to be the latest in a spate of domain name scams.

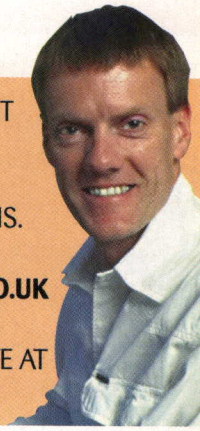
The email, sent by a company calling itself 'Dot Biz Domain Renewal' first arrived in inboxes in May, and a second batch is now circulating the Net.

But ICANN-registered registrar Internetters warns businesses to ignore the message, as the first .biz names were only registered in November 2001 and were based on an initial period of two years, so the earliest registered won't expire until November 2003.

"The Net abounds with unsolicited emails with invitations to renew domain names," says Ken Sorrie, co-founder and director of Internetters. "Often they appear to come from a UK-based address but actually transfer the names to a registrar on the other side of the globe."

For details on the official renewal policy visit the Internetters site at **www.domainregistry.biz.**

Your Business Online Q&A



EVERY ISSUE, OUR RESIDENT EXPERT, **GERARD LISTON** FROM SMALLBIZ UK, ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS. CONTACT GERARD BY EMAILING **PI@PARAGON.CO.UK** OR VISITING THE YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE WEB SITE AT **WWW.YBOANSWERS.CO.UK**

THIS MONTH, WE LOOK AT A SERIES OF QUESTIONS THAT HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED REGARDING LEGAL MATTERS, AND RESPONSES FROM OUR LEGAL CONTENT PARTNER, LEGALPULSE.COM

Q Am I entitled to mention a competitor's name as a header in an advertising campaign?

Mark Reid

A **In the first instance, you are unlikely to have any entitlement over your competitor's trade name or company name. The second issue raised by this, which is a much more important question, is do you have a good business reason for wanting to mention their name?**

Ignoring the risk of legal action if your promotional headline damages your competitor's reputation or includes a questionable claim, I advise that you weigh up how much benefit you will really gain from this promotional tactic.

While you may wish to differentiate your service, it is likely that your customers will see it as 'knocking' the competition. Inevitably, you are much more concerned about competitors than any of your customers are, so highlighting one company's name may do nothing more than bring an alternative supplier to their attention. Why not use a less visible promotional tool, such as telemarketing, perhaps targeting your competitor's customers with a special offer?

Also, consider how your competitor will respond. It is unlikely that they will sit back quietly while you employ negative promotion like this against them. They may well respond in kind – perhaps highlighting any of your company's relative weaknesses or even initiating a price battle that would benefit neither of your businesses in the long run.

In short, I would advise you to avoid promoting against a named competitor unless you have a compelling strategic reason for doing so... and of course you have taken legal advice!

Q Is it possible to get the addresses of importers from the Internet? Can you suggest some useful Web sites?

Neil Penry

A **Yes, there are many sites available designed specifically to encourage UK firms to undertake international trade. Not surprisingly, UK Government sites such as www.tradepartners.gov.uk and the Customs & Excise site at www.hmce.gov.uk are among the best known.**

You specifically ask for recommendations for sites that provide details of UK importers, so I suggest you take a look at the following two sites: www.trade-statistics.com claims to offer a database of 125,000 UK companies who import from outside the EU; www.uktradeinfo.com is operated by HM Customs & Excise and provides detailed information on UK imports and exports.

Assuming that you plan to undertake a mailshot or telemarketing campaign to get your name known, you are quite right to think very carefully about which data source you uses before you instigate any other plans. The quality of your list is understandably the most influential aspect of any form of direct marketing.

Don't forget other offline sources of information. Publications such as *Importing Today* may offer opportunities to reach your target audience, and your local Chamber of Commerce is probably a source of useful information and advice about exporting and importing.

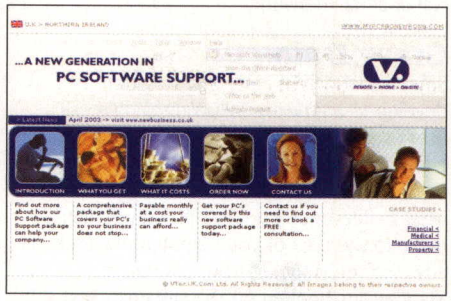
Q I operate a small consultancy business, which is largely dependent on a couple of PCs. I want to reduce the risk to my business in case of technical problems, but I also want to avoid paying for costly IT experts. What do you suggest?

Adrian Corser

A **Inevitably, IT consultancies and support companies tend to target firms with large PC networks, where they are more likely to make money. But, of course, small businesses still need to protect themselves.**

Firstly, remember that PC manufacturers often have superb support services. I recently used Dell's one-hour email support service to fix a problem when upgrading an old desktop machine, which cost nothing. For a peace-of-mind solution, you might take a look at www.mypcsgonewrong.com, which provides an annual support package from as little as £200 for a single PC.

Finally, don't forget that your business data faces Web-based risks as well as potential technical problems. The recently launched www.esecurity4britain.org site provides a wide range of advice, information and solutions to combat this growing risk to small firms.



If you want help when the chips are down, turn to www.mypcsgonewrong.com

eSecurity 4Britain
Welcome
home page
best practice
esecurity solutions
business network
usiness resources
esecurity news
press office
supporters
about us
Recent intelligence reports suggest that small businesses ha
This, coupled with the constant barrage of security breaches
e-security a matter of national importance.
eSecurity4Britain's mission is to inform, educate and pr
small businesses can use the internet to operate their bu
To create awareness about the immediate threats to s
To promote understanding of best-practice for small bu
To provide convenient access to relevant products and
To help promote this campaign with a web site link Click h
To register for a free bulletin about eSecurity matters Click

You can protect your business from Web attacks with eSecurity4Britain

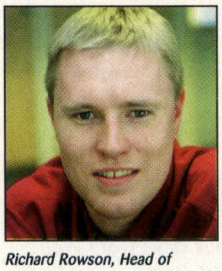
How we built Qjump.co.uk

TAKING THE PAIN OUT OF TAKING THE TRAIN, QJUMP IS THE QUICKEST WAY TO BUY RAIL TICKETS OVER THE NET. **JAMES THORNTON** FINDS OUT HOW THE RECENTLY RELAUNCHED SITE WAS BUILT

Once upon a time, hopping aboard a steam train was one of the easiest and most relaxing ways to travel. Then came rail privatisation and things started to get a little ugly as prices rose, carriages fell into disrepair, and just getting a ticket to board became something of a mission.

Anyone who's caught a train in the last few years will know how infuriating it is when you turn up at the station only to be greeted with a queue the length of a small town, and consequently nearly miss your train after paying the earth for the privilege of sitting in a cramped coach next to a noisy teenager scoffing smelly prawn cocktail crisps.

But the welcome news is that it doesn't have to be this way, and the Internet is providing a means of avoiding all this hassle.



Richard Rowson, Head of Business Systems at Qjump

One of the catalysts behind a move back to a cheaper and more convenient means of travelling by train is **Qjump.co.uk**, which belongs to public transport giant, the National Express Group. The site is designed to allow customers to purchase tickets for any UK National Rail journey, regardless of train operator. Visitors can simply search via the quickest or the cheapest route, and are offered a range of journey options and ticket types without the need to register up-front.

"National Express wanted to centralise the retailing for all of their nine train companies," explains Richard Rowson, Head of Business Systems at Qjump.

"This is essentially why Qjump was formed – to act as an agent to the train companies and to give National Express a national brand that can link with other national organisations to promote rail ticket sales for use across the UK National Rail network."

Gravy train

Since its launch in early 2002, Qjump has developed a growing following among rail users desperate to get their tickets on the cheap by booking in advance online. You only need to look at the site's home page to see what a difference booking in this way can make to the cost of your trip. For instance, an advance return ticket from London to Manchester booked on the site costs just £22, compared to the £175 you'd pay for a standard open return.

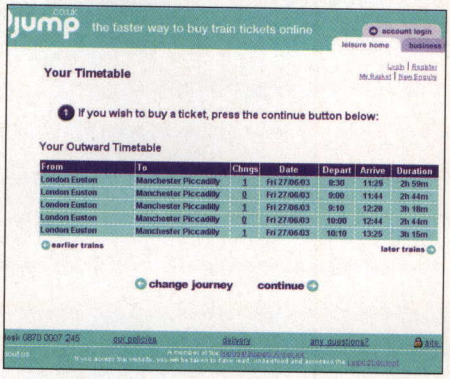
It seems that travellers are wising up to the savings that can be made too, as Rowson states: "Compared to last year, sales have increased by over 400 percent, and since we've relaunched the site the record day for sales has been smashed."

The relaunch Rowson refers to took place in June, and was designed to make it easier for people to book tickets over the Net, while encouraging more new customers to make the switch to this approach.

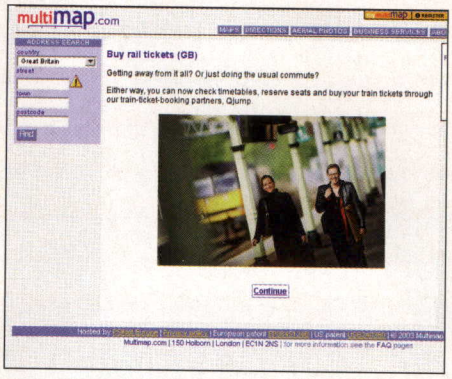
"We conducted a lot of research to find out what our customers wanted from their site," says Qjump's Head of Business Systems. "The success of the Web site has been built on its

By partnering with companies such as Hilton Hotels, Qjump is able to make some top offers to its customers

Hopping aboard a train can be a much easier and more relaxing way to travel than you might think



Qjump makes the process of booking tickets online as easy and straightforward as possible


multimap.com
Buy rail tickets (GB)
Getting away from it all? Or just doing the usual commute?
Either way, you can now check timetables, reserve seats and buy your train tickets through our train-ticket-booking partners, Qjump.
Continue

Thanks to Qjump's partnership with Multimap, visitors to the Multimap site can buy rail tickets without visiting another site

simplicity and speed. The objective was to ensure these principles remained, while at the same time giving visitors to the site more reasons to travel by train."

Rail links

In order to encourage people to hop on a train and take off somewhere, Qjump has enlisted the help of some of the UK's biggest online and offline brands such as Barclaycard, Multimap and Hilton Hotels. The new site takes advantage of these tie-ins to use content from partners' sites, allowing the visitor to kill two birds with one stone.

As Rowson explains: "Our partnership with Multimap, for example, means visitors to the Multimap site can buy rail tickets without the need to visit another site. The partnerships have given us another opportunity to reach consumers. The fact that rail is relevant to so many Web sites means we can add real value to leading UK brands."

"COMPARED TO LAST YEAR, SALES HAVE INCREASED BY OVER 400 PERCENT" RICHARD ROWSON

Ticket to success

Of course, the increase in sales cannot be solely attributed to an intelligent user interface or a cosy relationship with some of the country's most well-known firms. Qjump has masterminded a promotional campaign spanning both the real world and the virtual space, advertising its services at train stations, online and at search engines such as Google.

"The adverts highlighted the massive cost savings associated with booking rail tickets online and in advance," Rowson points out.

"Another reason is that people generally are increasingly getting used to buying online. More and more people have access to the Internet and this, together with the fact that we're continually improving the site, means I expect the number of people buying train tickets online to continue to increase."

One of the reasons why Qjump has blossomed is due to the efficiency of the site's online ordering system. Faced with the thankless task of handling thousands of different ticket orders covering an endless range of routes and destinations, Rowson and his team were able to mastermind a system capable of handling a range of possibilities. The system works by retrieving all valid fares for a journey then checking them in real-time with the rail industry reservation system to find which are available. Many of the fares are only available in advance and must have reservations made at the time of booking – typically much cheaper than the best fare you can pick up on the day you travel.

"I'm most proud of the booking system – this is obviously the most important part of the site as it's the reason people come to the site," he stresses.

"There are over 100 million different fares and routing options in the UK rail industry. Our job is to ensure that customers are sold the right ticket for their journey. Customers find the site very easy to use, which when you consider how many fares are available is the best compliment the site can get."

Full steam ahead

The good news for weary travellers in the UK is that booking rail tickets looks set to get even easier. Later this year the National Ticket on Departure (TOD) scheme will be launched, which will enable customers to collect their tickets immediately before they travel via a fast ticket machine, regardless of which company runs the station.

Rowson is looking forward to the next few months in what he calls "an exciting time for online retailing", and points to the arrival of TOD as a springboard for greater things for Qjump.

"I expect this to have a big impact on online sales, as booking rail tickets online will no longer be confined to advance fares," he explains.

Customers will be given a reference number after booking their ticket. When they arrive at the station all they have to do is put their credit card in the machine and key in the reference number and their ticket will be there."

It seems that at long last the rail industry may be about to emerge from a dark tunnel into the sunshine, and that's thanks in no small part to sites such as Qjump. As Richard Rowson concludes: "The rail industry has a reputation of being very complicated. Our job is to make the process of buying train tickets as easy as possible." ■

Site stats

QJUMP
www.Qjump.co.uk

- **Who designed it?**
  In-house
- **Software used?**
  J2EE Java application running on Sun Solaris OS, integrated into various legacy rail industry systems
- **Sales increase in the last year?**
  400 percent
- **Number of fare and destination combinations handled by the site?**
  100 million
- **Telephone helpdesk?**
  0870 0007 245

TIME SCALE

March 2001 – National Express begins developing the idea for an online train ticket booking system

January 2002 – Qjump.co.uk goes live for the first time

May 2002 – The company forms a strategic partnership with Multimap to provide online rail ticket services

March 2003 – National Express Group announces operating profits of £130.9 million

June 2003 – The site is relaunched in an effort to improve ease of use and attract more visitors

Keep 'em happy

GETTING NEW CUSTOMERS IS FAR MORE COSTLY THAN RETAINING YOUR EXISTING ONES – **CINDY DUFFIELD** EXPLAINS HOW TO BUILD A LOYAL RELATIONSHIP IN THE FACELESS WORLD OF WEB TRADING

Customer relations, or CRM, is not merely an example of today's jargon. In reality, developing a strong relationship with your customers assures you of their repeat business, that they will recommend you to their friends, offer advice and share ideas, and constructively criticise when the need arises. No giant leap for mankind here: the same rules applied to running the family-owned village shop in the Fifties as to running an international virtual store today.

There are, however, two fundamental differences. Firstly, the facelessness of Web-based transactions, creating a virtual barrier between seller and customer. Secondly, the technology at our fingertips that is the happy medium of communication between all parties involved in the transaction. With the latter, we should be able to overcome the negativity of the former, ie build relationships with your customers to make them feel loved, cherished and more inclined to part with their hard-earned dosh – ultimately drawing a distinction between you and your competitors, and of course, improving the bottom line. As the old adage goes, it's costs a lot less to keep an old customer than it does to attract new ones.

How to relate

So how do you go about building good customer relations? The first step must be to have a site that is appealing to visit and easy to navigate, taking customers quickly to where they want to go and with no irritating download delays. That aside, the key to any good relationship is to know the other party and to communicate with them on their level.

Regardless of how basic the technology or low the attributed budget, customer relations solutions should be able to identify the most profitable customers and provide a history of their spending behaviour, detailing what they bought, and equally as important, what they rejected. From this you can glean information on their preferred product areas, financial limitations, and the ramifications of external influences such as seasonal changes.

From this essential info, you can start to build a profile on each customer, adding to it their preferred method of communication together with the frequency, why they like to do business with you, and the type of tactics that will best open their purse strings. But whichever CRM software you choose, there are some basic guidelines that are worthy of note.

You may believe you have good customer relations, but nothing will work harder for you

than proof. Ask for feedback, offering as many routes for their response as possible – email and phone being the most commonplace. Positive comments can be posted onto the Web site, reassuring others that you are 'nice people to do business with'. Complaints are an opportunity to build a relationship. Respond quickly, resolve the issue swiftly and compensate if necessary – the words of dissatisfied customers are both weighty and pervasive.

After their first purchase, your objective must be to retain the customer's business, encouraging them to buy more and to look to you as the preferred supplier. But there is a fine dividing line between useful, non-intrusive communication and that which is viewed as pushy and invasive.

Offer your customers an opt-in to regular newsletters, details of special offers and products that match their profile. Give them the option of how they would like to be communicated with – email, SMS, post, fax or phone – and how often, and stick to the agreement. A big part of their loyalty to you will be based on knowing they can trust you to abide by your agreements, and if your communications are excessive they'll merely get dumped in the spam bin.

Read all about it

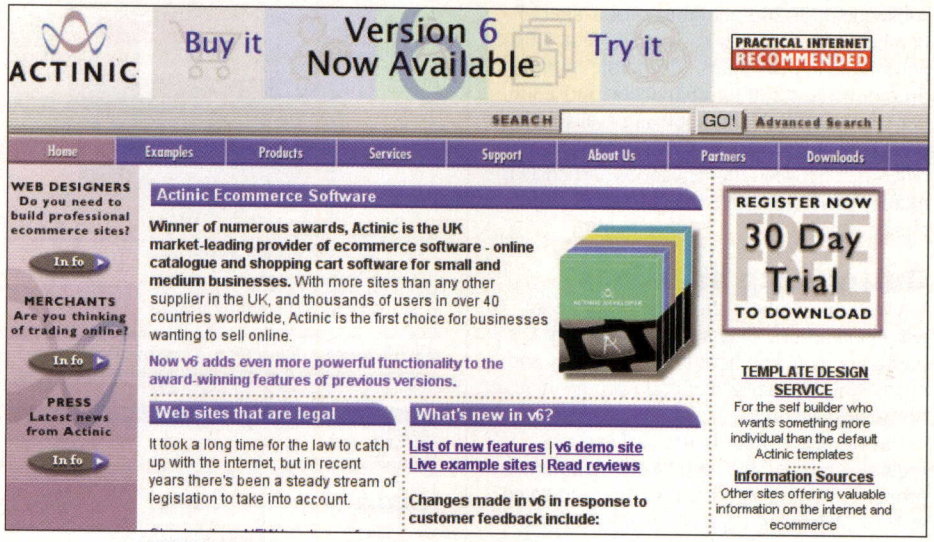
Message boards should be encouraged, as they are a good means of drawing customers together with the specific purpose of talking about your products, and hopefully congratulating one another for making the right purchase choice.

Message boards can be breeding grounds for new ideas and for positive as well as negative feedback. The advantage of the latter is that if you know about it, you can react and adapt. The great British tactic is to quietly leave a supplier we're unhappy with – skulking away without complaint to find an alternative. Message boards provide a safe 'coffee morning' environment to grumble together.

If there's some budget to spare, investment in more sophisticated CRM facilities can be invaluable, automating labour-intensive and repetitive activities. Email management software enables consumers to receive an instant response confirming that their communication has been received and will be dealt with shortly. Software is also available to analyse the content of incoming mail and send it to the correct department/individual for processing. Be careful though, not to de-personalise in the process of automating, and however far you take this, make sure the consumer is responded to within the notified time frame. If you appear disinterested, they'll go elsewhere.

"IF YOUR COMMUNICATIONS ARE EXCESSIVE, THEY'LL MERELY GET DUMPED IN THE SPAM BIN"

Likewise, competitions or surveys designed to accrue key customer details can be handled by an auto-responder that acknowledges the entry by replying with an email, subsequently creating a database of all who've entered. Existing customers should be given incentives to introduce new ones, and a database of those who 'recommend a friend' should also be developed – they are your sales force and need special attention.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Information Sources
Other sites offering valuable information on the internet and ecommerce

Actinic Business has been the saviour of many a small business with its inexpensive price tag and intuitive setup procedure

Sweet smell of success

Using Actinic Business, Michael Parker, founder of online tuck shop A Quarter Of (see below), is capable of running detailed analyses of customers, including the paths they take, how long they spend and what browsers they use. He explains: "We can see which search engines they have used, what they have searched for, and can also evaluate any adverts we may run in the future. Best of all, we can narrow this down to people who have visited specific pages on the site, eg the Order Confirmation page, so we can see where customers come from."

Using an 0800 number in conjunction with your Web site further reinforces your national image and enables your customers to call you free from anywhere in the country. Costs vary according to the type of number you select and whether those received are in peak times. From Future Numbers (**www.freephonenumbers.co.uk**), you can expect to pay £1,000 connection fee and a

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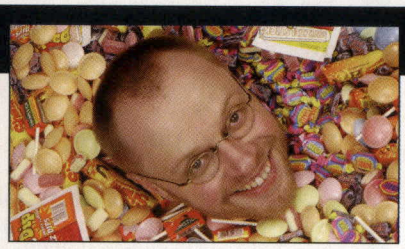
Case study: A Quarter Of



*"Without CRM technology, A Quarter Of simply could not operate," Michael Parker, founder of online tuck shop A Quarter Of (**www.aquarterof.co.uk**)*

ESTABLISHED IN 2002 by Michael Parker, A Quarter Of (AQO) is an online sweet/tuck shop that believes in a personal service to satisfy the needs of its 100+ daily customer hits. Of customer relations, Parker says: "Without CRM technology, A Quarter Of simply could not operate."

By using shopping cart software, AQO can get a view of all customers, responding to each one with specific requests or comments. Parker tries to respond to emails personally. Reviewing his experience, he says, "I believe you should harvest as much data as possible. You don't have to look at it, but the history of what has happened on the site is invaluable for decision making and testing new or different ways of doing things in the future."

He adds some words of advice: "I think the secret of using technology is to use it as invisibly as possible. I don't think that most people looking at our quirky little site would realise that there are so many programs running behind the scenes. I think that's the key."

A Quarter Of uses Actinic Business, RRP £799.

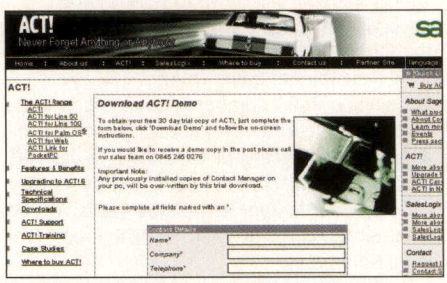
subsequent £1,200 per annum for a 'special' number, with costs per call coming in at 7.5p per minute in peak times. 'Corporate' numbers drop down to £350 for connection and £300 per year, and 'Gold' numbers are available for a one off connection cost of £250. The difference between the categories and costs is merely how memorable the number is – the choice is yours.

Outsourcing dilemmas

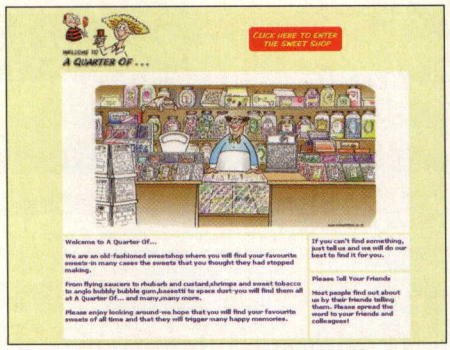
While 0800 numbers afford customers easy telephone access, they also place a heavy burden on you. You have to be there, day and night, 365 days per year. So, do you go in-house or outsource?

Having your own in-house 'call centre' requires considerable hard cash investment in property, its associated furnishings, and some very stout, leading-edge commitment. Good quality people need to be recruited, trained, motivated and given incentives. It's a costly exercise but, done right, a small price to pay for an expanding base of satisfied and profitable customers.

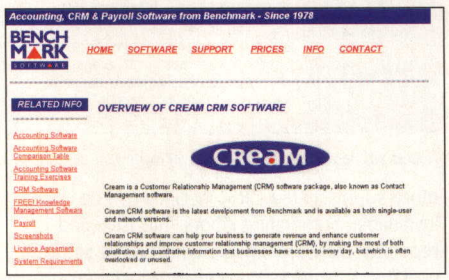
Outsourcing your call centre to a specialist firm clearly removes the headaches associated with property and maintaining a happy team, but with that comes a price. The external approach also minimises your control over quality and could extinguish that personal touch, held so dear. The pros, cons and costs all need to be carefully analysed to make the decision best suited to your specific needs, budget and sales volume.



The CRM software solution from ACT! is available from £130, and is similar to Benchmark Software's 'Cream'



Online tuck shop A Quarter Of has a friendly, informal appearance, which in itself encourages new customers


Accounting, CRM & Payroll Software from Benchmark - Since 1978
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CReaM

Benchmark's nifty Cream software promises to give you a contact management solution for £100 plus a tenner a month

Counting the cost

What about the cost of CRM software? Benchmark Software has recently launched 'Cream' – a CRM solution that concentrates on contact management – for £100 plus a monthly support fee of £10. In a similar field is ACT! from Sage from £130. For a more automated and interactive solution, Actinic's Business is £799. Clearly, CRM software abounds and the costs vary considerably. However, there are some that cater specifically for the SME, both in capability and costs. Match your needs with their features, and check the basis such as ease of integration and future scalability to cope with your growing needs.

The Net and the supporting technology and communications infrastructure have presented us with a new world of opportunity. But ultimately, business is business, and the old-fashioned rules still apply: stay close to your customers – without them, you have nothing but potential... ■

What not to do

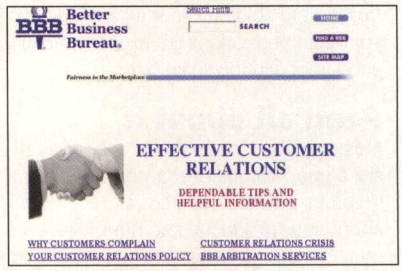
- Don't use your customer relations technology or processes to collect lots of valuable data to segment and profile your best customers – only to blanket email them on an excessive basis. Nothing turns off a customer more quickly.
- If a customer has a complaint regarding a third party entrusted by you to provide a service (eg delivery), don't pass the buck. Your customers are not interested in whose fault it is – they want what they were promised and their hard-earned cash has gone to *you*. Own the problem and resolve it.
- No matter how irate a customer gets, how angry or insulting, don't be rude. On the other hand, there's no need for servility. If there's a problem, acquire the facts, explain what you are going to do about it, when you are going to do it – and then make sure you do it!
- Don't assume that the technology is the be all and end all. Ultimately, people do business with people, and if your company doesn't have a customer-relations culture, the technology will be worthless.
- Don't ever forget, the customer is king.

Web resources

The Business Email

newsweaver.co.uk/bizofemail

Provides a news service on marketing issues facing eCommerce organisations, eg research results on email marketing and advances in legislation affecting spam, as well as hints and tips on how to best market yourself over the Net.



Better Business

www.bbb.org/library/customer.asp.

A US site it may be, but this one provides a really good overview of issues that face those implementing a customer relations policy – not so much the technological solutions, but more the cultural approach that is required.

Freephone Numbers

www.freephonenumbers.co.uk.

Explains the various 08 numbers that are available to you and what they deliver. Also illustrates the types of 0800 numbers that can be attained for the different costs.

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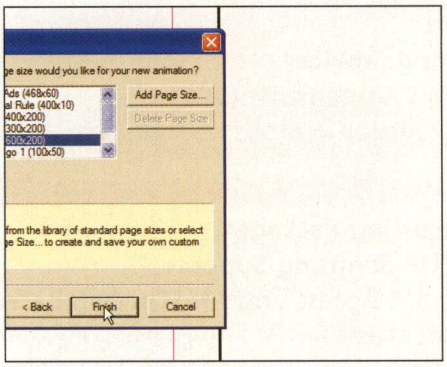
In brief:
Task: Learn the basics of DrawPlus
Software I need: DrawPlus 4.0
Difficulty: Not too tough
Time I need: Allow half an hour

Produce Web graphics with DrawPlus 4.0

TAKE A DIP INTO THE WORLD OF VECTOR GRAPHICS TO PRODUCE EXCITING AND EYE-CATCHING WEB IMAGES WITH THIS INTUITIVE AND VERSATILE SUITE

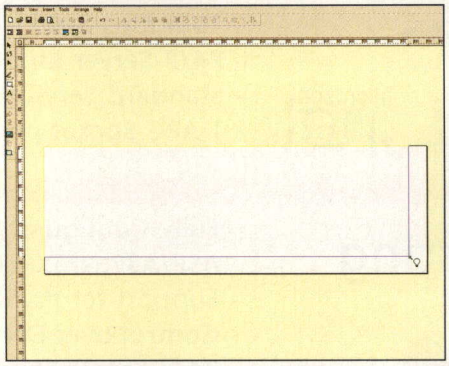
YOU PROBABLY HAVE a favourite Web graphics package, such as Paint Shop Pro or Photoshop, but there are plenty of alternatives. Serif's DrawPlus series has won acclaim for the way it allows the creation of impressive professional and fun images with little fuss. This can range from dynamic business cards to promotional flyers and animated GIFs. Version 4 is packed with templates, textures and effects that are used in the handy wizards to get you started quickly. There are also 'QuickShapes' for drawing objects rapidly, while freehand tools and envelopes add a more personal touch. This is all handled through vector graphics and Bezier curves, so painting and tweaking the onscreen elements is very easy. The upshot is a clipart feel of clean lines and bold striking colours that can be uniquely combined with imported files or photography.

We will explore some of the main features by putting together a Web logo. DrawPlus has a number of document templates for this job, and will let you export them into Web image formats. We'll suggest some animation techniques and also give some hints on making Web buttons.



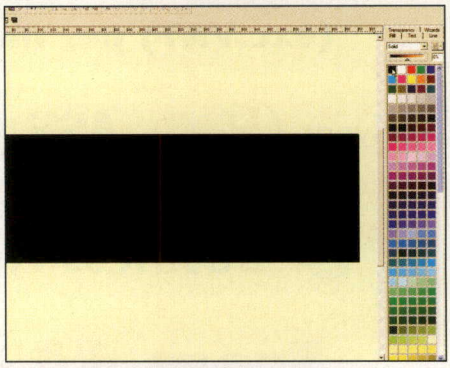
1 Let's begin

Start a new document from the File menu and select 'Create an animation' from the Startup Wizard dialog. Click 'Next' and page sizes will be listed for selection. Scroll down and click the 'Logo 3' item and click 'Finish' to get started on our logo.



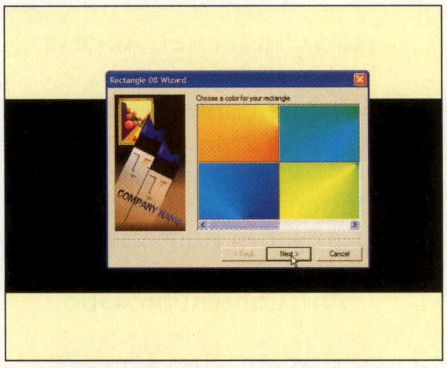
2 Create a background

We want a black background to work on, so we have to do this by drawing a rectangle. Open the 'QuickShapes' palette found on the toolbar docked on the left of the screen. Click 'QuickBox' and draw a rectangle to completely cover the new document.



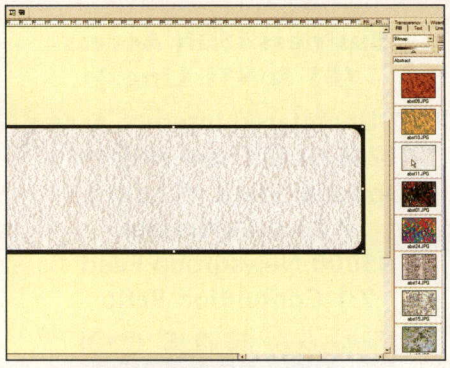
3 Fill it in

Colouring objects in DrawPlus is largely taken care of by the panel on the right. Fill the new rectangle with black by selecting it and opening the 'Fill' tab. You should see a large Colour palette and fill-type menu. Set this to 'Solid' then choose 'black'.



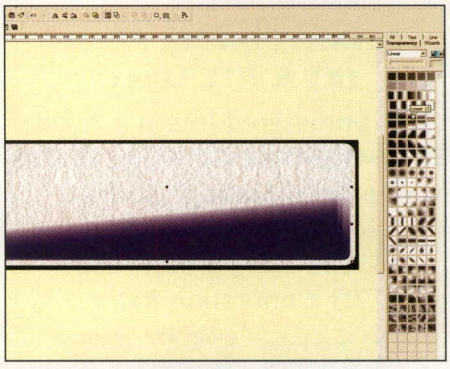
4 Rectangle wizard

We want a granite stone face to the logo, with rounded corners. Click the 'Wizards' tab on the Palette panel and select 'Shape Art – Rectangles' from the drop-down list. Select rectangle number '8' and pick a colour from the dialog to draw the shape.



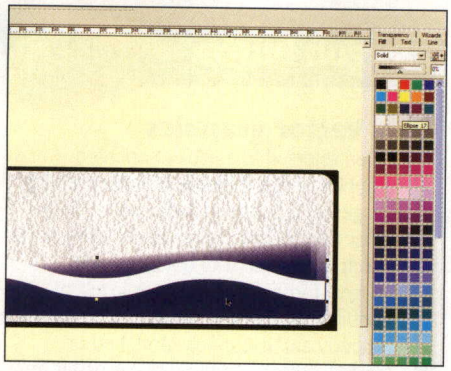
5 Adding a texture

Use the draw handles on the rectangle to size and position it accordingly. We want it to cover most of the background, but leave some thin black margins all around. Change its colour to a stone texture by selecting 'Fill' and then 'Bitmap' from the menu.



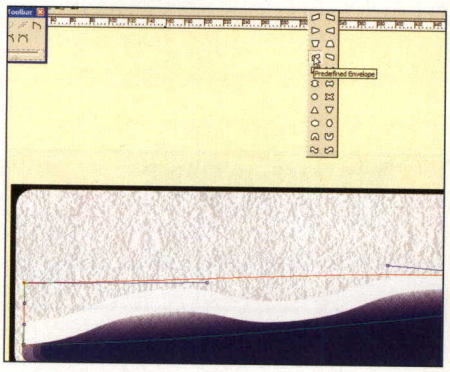
6 Water picture

Next, create a 'water' effect by drawing another rounded rectangle in the same way. Place it at the bottom of the logo area, covering the full length but half the height. Fill this with a dark blue and apply the slanted 'linear 13' from the Palette panel.



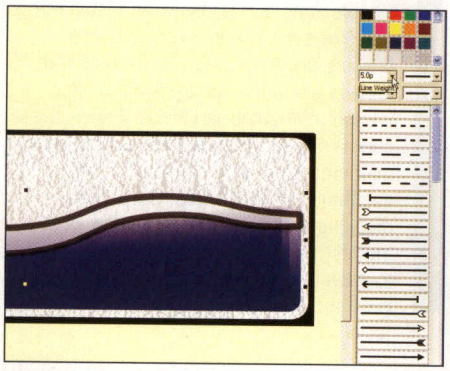
7 Making waves

We need to create movement on the water by adding a wave. Select 'QuickWave' from the Shapes menu and draw a simple double wave shape on the logo. Use the 'Fill' panel to colour it white and resize it with the 'Pointer' tool to fit the water length.



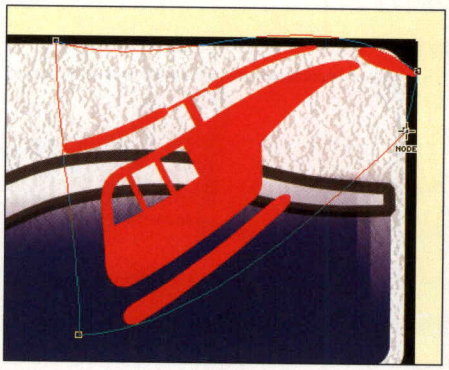
8 Pushing the envelope

With the Wave shape selected, open the 'Envelope' menu by clicking 'User defined envelope' on the main toolbar. Pick the sixth icon to add an incline gradient, and nip and tuck the outline handles into position. Resize or rotate the shape if needed.



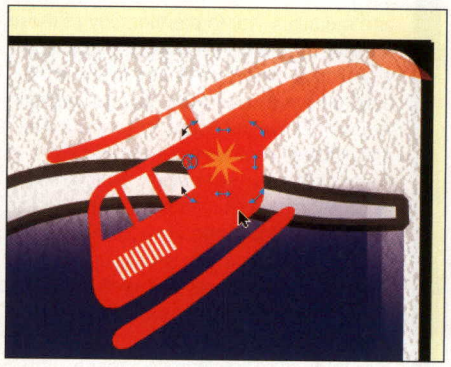
9 Add an outline

Once the waves are skirting the water into the distance, set their transparency to around 30%. This clashes with the background, so add an outline from the Palette panel's 'Line' tab. Select 'black' as the colour and set the Line Weight menu to '5.0p'.



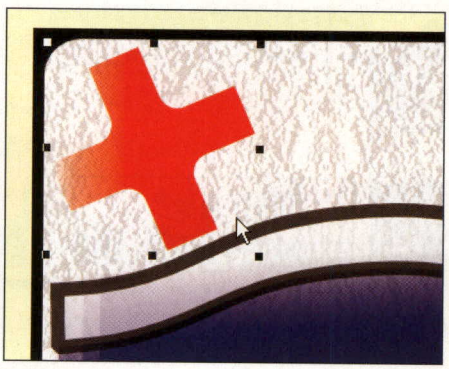
10 Your very own helicopter

In the Shapes menu select 'QuickTransport' and draw the helicopter shape. Fill this red and flip it horizontally with the button on the main bar. Rotate it 45 degrees; apply the fourth wedge-shaped envelope. Contort as shown; place close to the top right corner.



11 Finer details

To tailor the design slightly we'll add some little touches to the helicopter. First give the shape a 'linear 6' transparency then draw a small white grid shape from the menu. Rotate this onto the side of the copter, along with a mini orange star shape.



12 Don't cross me

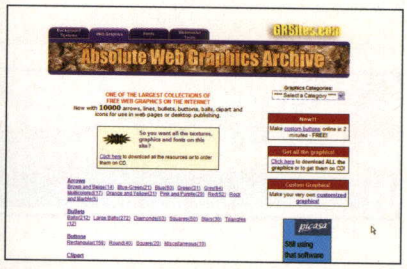
The final element before adding text is a red cross. Draw a 'QuickCross' from the Shapes menu on the left side of the logo. Widen its axis with the 'Node Sliders' and rotate it left by about 60 degrees. Fade its edge by applying a 'linear 6' transparency.

Web resources

Serif

www.serif.com

This is the official corporate site for Serif, and has a number of sections promoting latest product versions and customer support. If you like what you've seen in Version 4, all the facilities are here for ordering the update, along with helpful tutorials to guide you through.



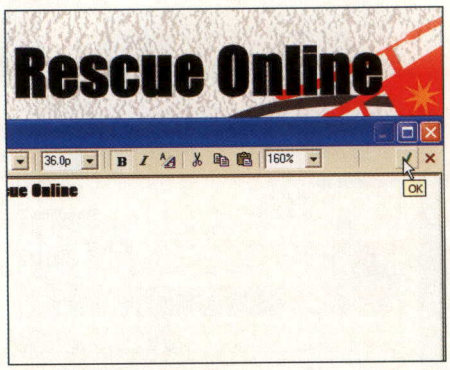
Absolute Web Graphics

www.grsites.com/webgraphics/

If you'd prefer to take a shortcut to getting Web graphics or just want some inspiration, point your browser here. It claims to have one of the largest free collections going, and there's all sorts of stuff to be had, from backgrounds to fonts, clipart to buttons and much more.

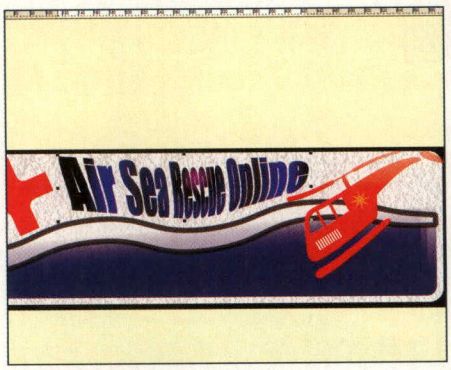
Power users' tip

ONE OF THE page templates in the Animations wizard is for creating Web buttons. You have a smaller workspace, but can set a button size of different dimensions. To start, draw a basic rectangle or use one of the rounded ones from the Wizard tab on the Palette panel. You can paint this in a solid colour or apply an effective 'sunburst' look with the Fill tools. Borders can be added with the quick shapes by drawing thin rectangles and joining them with the rounded corners. Be imaginative, and you should achieve some impressive 3D effects. Add text last, and highlight it by outlining. Your buttons can be exported as GIFs for use in your HTML.



13 Adding text

To add text to our logo click the 'Text tool' button with the 'A' icon on it. Type the words/phrases you wish to see then click the default text. In the Edit box, highlight the text and change the font to 'Impact bold' with a size of '36'. Hit the tick button to confirm.



14 Funk it up

Manipulate the text to fit the contours of the water by selecting the wavy envelope from the menu. Drag the handles to get the shape you want and finish it off with a funky colour. On the Fill menu you can choose from many psychedelic patterns.

15 Our logo

Here's one we did earlier. With continued tinkering you can achieve some decent results, so don't be afraid to be adventurous. Here we've just added another text element on the cross, so we'll finish by animating this so it flashes.

16 Clone it

When animating, save time by cloning a frame so you needn't draw all the elements again. Click the 'Clone Frame' button on the top bar, and an identical frame will be created in a new window. Select the 'S.O.S.' text on the first frame and delete it.

17 Blinkin' URL

On the second frame we'll also add a flashing URL for the site by adding more text. Place this over the water on the bottom of the logo and ensure it's a colour that'll stand out. Next, change the helicopter's star from orange to yellow to look like a flashlight.

18 Preview the logo

To see the animated image working, press 'Preview Animation' on the main toolbar. A window appears showing the logo's animation playing back with all the flashing elements doing their stuff. You can make the effect subtler by adding more frames.

Jargon buster

Vector graphics

Often referred to as object-oriented graphics, this is a method of representing images with geometrical formulae. They differ from bitmapped or raster alternatives, which use patterns of dots to render images, through their greater levels of flexibility. Apart from having the ability to be properly and accurately stretched or resized, vector graphics appear better on printers and monitors of a higher resolution. They also require less memory for storage and processing than their bitmapped equivalents.

Bezier curve

Drawing with Bezier curves can often be troublesome and fiddly when first starting out. However, within a vector-based drawing program their use as freehand tools is worth mastering. Named after French mathematician Pierre Bezier, these curves require at least three points to be mathematically defined. Anchor points sit at either end, with additional points dictating shape known as handles or 'nodes'. Lengthy control points are affixed to each handle and these may be used to twist and tilt the curve into a desired shape.

Power users' tip

AS YOU'LL KNOW, image file formats can be a little bewildering to say the least. There aren't just those set aside for Web suitability like GIFS and JPEGS, but bitmaps and metafiles, not to mention any of those for Mac use. What this means is that any graphics software worth its salt should be able to save pictures in a range of popular formats. DrawPlus does just this, but it isn't immediately obvious from its Save As dialog. It has its own default file type for documents and animations, so instead use the 'Export' command from the File menu. This is the method you should use to store all those page banners and Web buttons so they are in the correct format for your site. Conversely, if you want to embed external files into your DrawPlus documents, you can do this with the Insert menu. Pick the 'Object' command, and a limited number of file formats will be listed for importing. Similarly, this can be performed for photos and other files by using the 'Import Picture' button on the toolbar.

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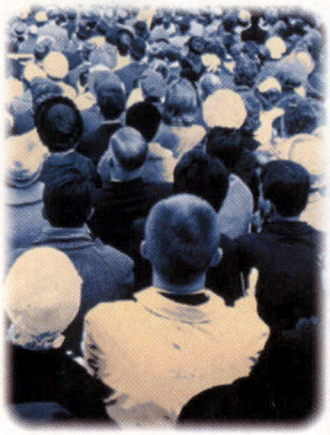

'This service was vital for not only making my website more understandable but also creating a more user friendly business model. I can't recommend this service highly enough!'

LogoVend.com

CD WOW! www.cd-wow.com

'Although we run a very successful online business it's always good to get outside feedback. Survival is about adapting your business to the customers needs. Site-Report.com allowed us to do just that!'

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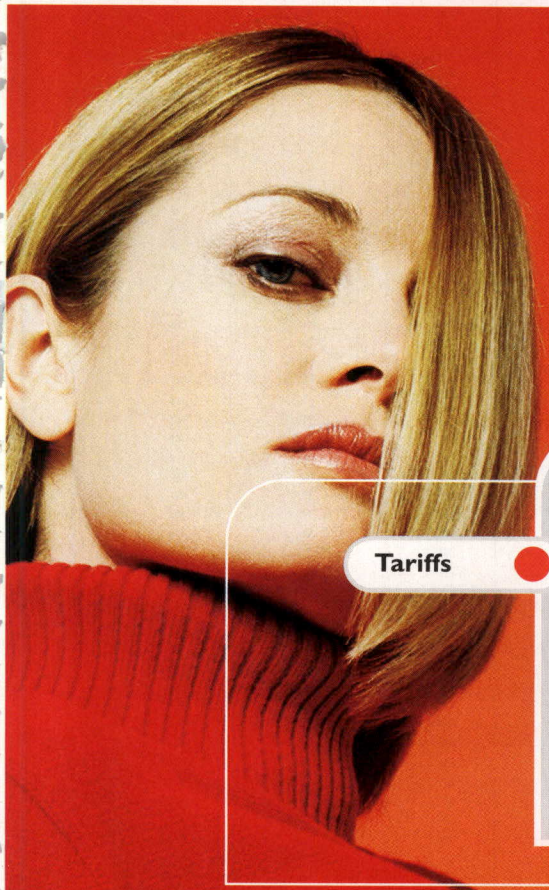

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Broadband Internet access for your business

If you're in business you'll know the importance of having a fast reliable Internet connection. With Giacom Broadband, not only is our service one of the best in the UK, our prices are hard to beat.
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Office Solo 500	Office Solo 1000	Office Solo 2000
• 50:1 Contention Ratio • 512 Kbps download • 256 Kbps upload • Static IP address	• 50:1 Contention Ratio • 1 Mbps download • 256 Kbps upload • Static IP address	• 50:1 Contention Ratio • 2 Mbps download • 256 Kbps upload • Static IP address
£26.99 plus VAT and set up	**£39.99 plus VAT and set up**	**£59.99 plus VAT and set up**
Office Express 500	**Office Express 1000**	**Office Express 2000**
• 20:1 Contention Ratio • 512 Kbps download • 256 Kbps upload • Static IP address	• 20:1 Contention Ratio • 1 Mbps download • 256 Kbps upload • Static IP address	• 20:1 Contention Ratio • 2 Mbps download • 256Kbps upload • Static IP address
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GIACOM

All prices subject to VAT at 17.5 per cent. Connection fee applies at £49.99. Estimated installation time is currently 10 days. Giacom Broadband is a service by Giacom World Networks Limited - www.giacom.com.

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Pick the perfect Web hosting deal

USE THIS AT-A-GLANCE GUIDE TO SELECT THE PERFECT HOME FOR YOUR BUSINESS OR ECOMMERCE WEB SITE

SELECTING A WEB hosting company to look after your business is just as tricky as picking the right ISP to connect you to the Internet. There's a baffling array of deals to choose from, each offering slightly different services and each charging slightly different prices. In short, there's no simple answer.

Our aim in compiling this guide is to allow you to see the different types of packages available and help you glean some idea of the costs you're likely to face. While we haven't included every single deal offered by the firms included (we could probably fill the whole of YBO with them) we have listed the products that we think are most relevant to our readers.

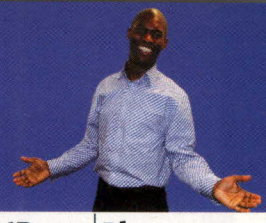
To use these listings effectively we recommend using the information below to pick out a handful of firms that cater for your needs. The next step is to contact each directly to discuss your requirements further.

Keeping up to date

WHILE WE TRY and ensure that all the information in our listings is up to date, the occasional error does creep through. If you would like to update your current details, drop an email to **pi@paragon.co.uk** with the information you would like changed.

NAME	URL	Package	Phone	Cost	Web space	POP3 Accounts	FrontPage Extensions	Phone Support
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Starters	0845 6012 586	£17.88	Yes	15	No	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Home	0845 6012 586	£59.88	100Mb	50	No	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Business	0845 6012 586	£107.88	300Mb	200	Yes	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Professionals	0845 6012 586	£203.88	800Mb	500	Yes	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Starters	0845 6012 586	£17.88	Yes	15	No	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Home	0845 6012 586	£59.88	100Mb	50	No	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Business	0845 6012 586	£107.88	300Mb	200	Yes	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Professionals	0845 6012 586	£203.88	800Mb	500	Yes	Yes
123-reg	www.123-reg.co.uk	Regular	0900 22 11 123	£45.87	250Mb	10	Yes	Yes
123-reg	www.123-reg.co.uk	Xtra	0900 22 11123	£69.87	500Mb	25	Yes	Yes
2020Media	www.2020media.com	Standard	0870 739 2020	£100.00	100Mb	15	Yes	Yes
2020Media	www.2020media.com	PHP	0870 739 2020	£150.00	100Mb	15	No	Yes
2020Media	www.2020media.com	Cold Fusion	0870 739 2020	£250.00	100Mb	15	No	Yes
2020Media	www.2020media.com	Java	0870 739 2020	£300.00	100Mb	15	No	Yes
4d Hosting	www.4dhosting.com	Bronze	0845 1668386	£20	10Mb	2	Yes	No
4d Hosting	www.4dhosting.com	Silver	0845 1668386	£64.99	25Mb	10	Yes	Yes
4d Hosting	www.4dhosting.com	Bronze	0845 1668386	£79.99	50Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Active ISP	www.activeisp.co.uk	Small Business	0870 7304000	£143.40	35Mb	10	Yes	Yes
AMEN hosting	www.amen.uk.com	promo WebPRO	None	£6	100Mb	10	Yes	No
AMEN hosting	www.amen.uk.com	regular WebPRO	None	£54	100Mb	10	Yes	No
AQ Limited	www.a-q.co.uk	10Mb	08707 449227	£70.00	10Mb	1	No	No
AQ Limited	www.a-q.co.uk	20Mb	08707 449227	£122.00	20Mb	5	No	No
AQ Limited	www.a-q.co.uk	50Mb	08707 449227	£190.00	50Mb	5	No	No
Business Serve	www.businessserve.co.uk	Business Serve Pro	08707 555565	£99.95	25Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Business Serve	www.businessserve.co.uk	Business Serve Premier	08707 555565	£199.95	50Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Business Serve	www.businessserve.co.uk	Business Serve Enterprise	08707 555565	£349.95	100Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Business Serve	www.businessserve.co.uk	Business Serve Enterprise NT	08707 555565	£399.95	100Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Light	0845 355 1000	£29.99	10Mb	10	No	No
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Starter	0845 355 1000	£59.99	50Mb	20	Yes	No
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Soho	0845 355 1000	£99.00	100Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Enterprise	0845 355 1000	£199.00	200Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Professional	0845 355 1000	£399.00	500Mb	200	Yes	Yes
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Advanced	0845 355 1000	£699.00	500Mb	200	Yes	Yes
Don Host	www.donhost.co.uk	Enterprise Plan	0870 7414151	£89.99	100Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Don Host	www.donhost.co.uk	Commerce Plan	0870 7414151	£179.99	250Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Efficient Hosting	www.efficienthosting.co.uk	Basic Plan	None	£167.40	10 MB	5	Yes	No
Efficient Hosting	www.efficienthosting.co.uk	Standard Plan	None	£239.40	75 MB	40	Yes	No
Efficient Hosting	www.efficienthosting.co.uk	Advanced Plan	None	£287.40	125 MB	60	Yes	No
EliteServe UK	www.eliteukserve.net	Business Kick Start	0870 741 5898	£49	50Mb	20	No	Yes
EliteServe UK	www.eliteukserve.net	Business Professional	0870 741 5898	£99.00	100Mb	100	No	Yes
Fast Hosts	www.fasthosts.co.uk	Home User	01452 541260	£60.00	200Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Fast Hosts	www.fasthosts.co.uk	Business User	01452 541260	£199.00	200Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Ghoulnet	www.ghoulnet.co.uk	Business Web	0800 0747581	£69.00	100Mb	50	Yes	No
Gio Internet	www.giointernet.com	Bronze Hosting	0870 922 4000	£70.50	50Mb	5	£50/year	Yes
Gio Internet	www.giointernet.com	Silver Hosting	0870 922 4000	£264.38	100Mb	10	£50/year	Yes
Gio Internet	www.giointernet.com	Gold Hosting	0870 922 4000	£346.63	250Mb	50	£50/year	Yes
Griffin Internet	www.griffin.net.uk	Windows 2000 Webspace	0870 0007100	£199	150Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Hostway	www.hostway-uk.com	Silver	0808 1801880	£89.95	100Mb	5	Yes	No
Hostway	www.hostway-uk.com	Gold	0808 1801880	£134.55	200Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Hostway	www.hostway-uk.com	Gold Plus	0808 1801880	£179.55	200MB	30	Yes	Yes
Hostway	www.hostway-uk.com	Platinum	0808 1801880	£449.55	500MB	50	Yes	Yes
Hostway	www.hostway-uk.com	Platinum Plus	0808 1801880	£809.95	500Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Iomart	www.iomart.com	NT Core Hosting 50	0870 0500303	£239.88	50Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Iomart	www.iomart.com	NT Core Hosting 75	0870 0500303	£359.88	75Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Iomart	www.iomart.com	NT Core Hosting 100	0870 0500303	£1199.88	100Mb	10	Yes	Yes

- Domain Names
- Virtual Web Hosting
- Dedicated Solutions
- Custom Enterprise Servers
- Advanced Control Panel
- Windows or Linux platforms
- 30 Day Money Back Guarantee
- Award winning Support



NAME	URL	Package	Phone	Cost	Web space	POP3 Accounts	FrontPage Extensions	Phone Support
KCDnet	www.kcdnet.com	Personal	None	£29.99	50Mb	1	Yes	No
KCDnet	www.kcdnet.com	Advanced	None	£89.99	100Mb	4	Yes	No
KCDnet	www.kcdnet.com	Executive	None	£159.99	200Mb	10	Yes	No
Magic Moments	www.magic-moments.com	Magic Entry	0115 9170000	£99.95	250MB	1	No	Yes
Magic Moments	www.magic-moments.com	Magic Pro	0115 9170000	£199.95	750Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Magic Moments	www.magic-moments.com	Magic Business	0115 9170000	£199	250Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Magic Moments	www.magic-moments.com	Magic Business eCommerce	0115 9170000	£499	250Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Metronet	www.metronet.co.uk	Toe in the water	020 8426 4446	£49.00	None	None	Yes	Yes
Metronet	www.metronet.co.uk	Going for a paddle	020 8426 4446	£139.00	10Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Metronet	www.metronet.co.uk	Dive, dive, dive	020 8426 4446	£287.00	10Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Namehog	www.namehog.net	Small Business	0870 9059444	£42.00	100Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Namehog	www.namehog.net	Business Pro	0870 9059444	£60.00	200Mb	25	Yes	Yes
NetBenefit	www.netbenefit.com	Shared Hosting Package	0800 0724696	£180.00	100Mb	None	Yes	Yes
Netcetera	www.inetc.net	HOME	0800 2987214	£60	100Mb	1	Yes	Yes
Netcetera	www.inetc.net	COMMERCE	0800 2987214	£180	200Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Netcetera	www.inetc.net	RESELLER	0800 2987214	£450	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Netcetera	www.inetc.net	ENTERPRISE	0800 2987214	£1200	1000Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Netcetera	www.inetc.net	.NETppliance 800	0800 2987214	£1200	256Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Netcetera	www.inetc.net	.NETppliance 1400	0800 2987214	£3600	512Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
NetNation	www.netnation.co.uk	Starter	0800 0283639	£131.40	20Mb	1	Yes	No
NetNation	www.netnation.co.uk	Starter	0800 0283639	£131.40	20Mb	1	Yes	No
NetNation	www.netnation.co.uk	Pro	0800 0283639	£191.40	150Mb	20	Yes	No
NetNation	www.netnation.co.uk	Power	0800 0283639	£419.40	300Mb	40	Yes	No
Netway	www.netway.co.uk	Small to medium business	07020 939842	£199.00	20Mb	1	Yes	Yes
Oscura Ltd	www.oscura.co.uk	Business Development Hosting	0118 959 7200	£150	25Mb	6	Yes	Yes
Oscura Ltd	www.oscura.co.uk	Business Premium Hosting	0118 959 7200	£350	100MB	6	Yes	Yes
PMHIS.Net	www.pmhis.net	Web+	None	£60.00	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	No
Positive Internet Co	www.positive-internet.com	Shared Hosting	0800 316006	£250.00	120Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Powas Park	www.powaspark.net	Valuespace	0870 7303170	£49.99	100Mb	50	No	Yes
Powas Park	www.powaspark.net	Optisapce	0870 7303170	£99.99	IGb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Powas Park	www.powaspark.net	Commercespace	0870 7303170	£199.99	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Saffas	www.saffas.com	WS10	0781 628 2991	£10	10Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Saffas	www.saffas.com	WS50	0781 628 2991	£40	50Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Saffas	www.saffas.com	WS100	0781 628 2991	£70	100Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Seiretto	seiretto.com	Starter	N/A	£49	15Mb	1	Yes	Yes
Seiretto	seiretto.com	Starter	N/A	£149	300Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Simply.Com	www.simply.com	Simply Basic	01684 893020	£49.99	10Mb	0	No	No
Simply.Com	www.simply.com	Simply Soho	01684 893020	£69.99	50Mb	1	Yes	No
Simply.Com	www.simply.com	Simply Enterprise	01684 893020	£99.99	100Mb	10	Yes	No
Simply.Com	www.simply.com	Simply Corporate	01684 893020	£149.99	200Mb	20	Yes	No
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Entry	01707 885800	£99.99	40Mb	Unlimited	Yes	No
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Personal	01707 885800	£99.99	80Mb	Unlimited	Yes	No
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Small Business	01707 885800	£249.99	200Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Net Business	01707 885800	£399.99	400Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Executive	01707 885800	£499.99	400Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Executive E-Commerce	01707 885800	£799.99	600Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Sonnet	www.sonnet.co.uk	Solo Lite 24/7	N/A	£180	25Mb	25	Yes	Yes
Sonnet	www.sonnet.co.uk	Dial4Business	N/A	£120	50Mb	25	Yes	Yes
Sonnet	www.sonnet.co.uk	Solo Daytime	N/A	£180	50Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Sonnet	www.sonnet.co.uk	Solo 24/7	N/A	£300	50Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Sonnet	www.sonnet.co.uk	Symphony	N/A	£660	100Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Strongnet	www.strongnet.co.uk	Various	01703 866006	Various	50Mb	Unlimited	Unlimited	No
Supanames	www.supanames.co.uk	Value Host	0870 1257678	£13.99	35Mb	1	No	Yes
Supanames	www.supanames.co.uk	Value Host Pro	0870 1257678	£23.99	35Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Tigress UK	www.tigress-uk.com	Web50	0870 321 9528	£69.99	50Mb	3	No	Yes
Tollon	www.tollon.net	Home User Plan	0800 542 6549	£69.99	25Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Tollon	www.tollon.net	Business Plan 1	0800 542 6549	£99.99	50Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
UK Hosting	www.ukhosting.co.uk	5 megs	0845 082 0696	£55.00	20Mb	1	Yes	Yes
UK Hosting	www.ukhosting.co.uk	10 megs	0845 082 0696	£95.00	20Mb	1	Yes	Yes
UK Hosting	www.ukhosting.co.uk	20 megs	0845 082 0696	£125.00	20Mb	1	Yes	Yes
ValueWebHosts	www.valuewebhosts.com	Plan 1	n/a	£8.99	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	No
Verio	www.verio.co.uk	Starter	020 7767 3700	£109.45	10Mb	2	Yes	Yes
Verio	www.verio.co.uk	Designer	020 7767 3700	£197.45	50Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Verio	www.verio.co.uk	Business	020 7767 3700	£274.45	125Mb	40	Yes	Yes
Verio	www.verio.co.uk	Commerce	020 7767 3700	£384.45	175Mb	60	Yes	Yes
Virtual Internet	www.vi.net	Host	0800 11 77 44	£120	25Mb	12	Yes	Yes
Virtual Internet	www.vi.net	Business	0800 11 77 44	£215	50Mb	30	Yes	Yes
Virtual Internet	www.vi.net	Professional	0800 11 77 44	£480	250Mb	120	Yes	Yes
Virtual Internet	www.vi.net	Professional Plus	0800 11 77 44	£1980	250Mb	120	Yes	Yes
Web Fusion	www.webfusion.co.uk	WebFusion Entry	0115 917 0000	£99.95	250Mb	1	No	Yes
Web Fusion	www.webfusion.co.uk	WebFusion Pro	0115 917 0000	£199.95	750Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Web Fusion	www.webfusion.co.uk	WebFusion Business Pro	0115 917 0000	£199.00	250Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Web Fusion	www.webfusion.co.uk	WebFusion Business E-Commerce	0115 917 0000	£499.00	250Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Web Tapestry	www.webtapestry.co.uk	Basic Hosting	0800 0151718	£35.00	10Mb	1	Yes	Yes
Web Tapestry	www.webtapestry.co.uk	Economy Hosting	0800 0151718	£50.00	25Mb	2	Yes	Yes
Web Tapestry	www.webtapestry.co.uk	Senior Hostings	0800 0151718	£125.00	50Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Web Tapestry	www.webtapestry.co.uk	Executive Hostings	0800 0151718	£200.00	100Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Web Warehouse	www.web-warehouse.net	Entry	0845 126 0325	£40.00	25Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Web Warehouse	www.web-warehouse.net	Professional	0845 126 0325	£59.99	50	25	Yes	Yes
Web Warehouse	www.web-warehouse.net	Entry	0845 126 0325	£40.00	200Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Xsession	www.xsession.com	Personal Hosting	01784 460896	£39.00	25Mb	20	Yes	No
Xsession	www.xsession.com	Business Hosting	01784 460896	£94.00	200Mb	100	Yes	No
Xsession	www.xsession.com	Premium Hosting	01784 460896	£350.00	500Mb	350	Yes	No
Zebra Hosts.net	www.zebrahosts.net	Package 1	0845 4584200	£50.00	5Mb	0	No	No
Zebra Hosts.net	www.zebrahosts.net	Package 2	0845 4584200	£100.00	25Mb	0	Yes	No
Zebra Hosts.net	www.zebrahosts.net	Package 3	0845 4584200	£175.00	50Mb	1	Yes	No
Zebra Hosts.net	www.zebrahosts.net	Package 4	0845 4584200	£500.00	100Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ 4i 128	0870 6000971	£1,140	20Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ 4i 256	0870 6000971	£1,740	20Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ 4i 512	0870 6000971	£2,340	40Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ4r 256	0870 6000971	£2,3400	20Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ 4r 512	0870 6000971	£2,940	40Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ XTR 128	0870 6000971	£3,540	30Gb Unlimited	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ XTR 1Gb	0870 6000971	£4,740	80Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
ZyWeb Business	www.zyweb.com	ZyWeb Business	01392 209500	£210.00	30Mb	10	No	No

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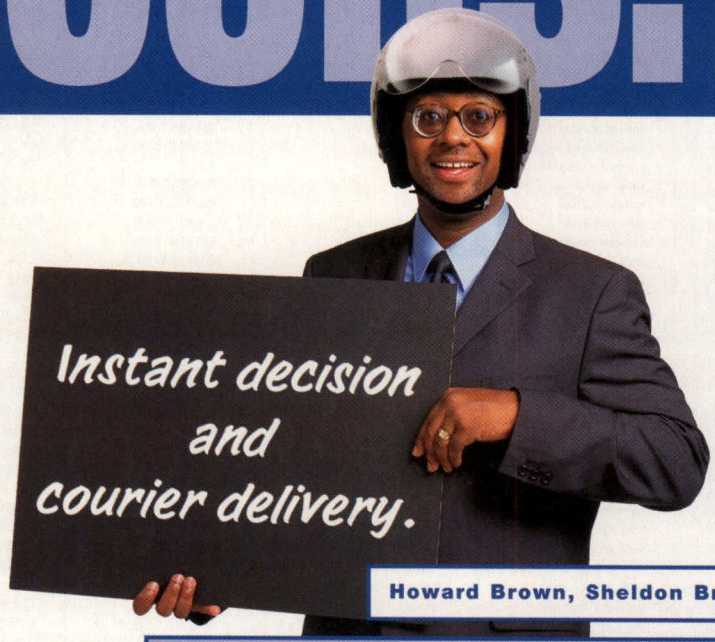

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Reviews

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO ALL THE LATEST INTERNET SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE

Welcome...

IT'S REVIEWS TIME once again, and this month sees some pretty impressive new kit given the *PI* road test. Along with a spiffing new Packard Bell desktop, there's also eJay's Techno 4 production suite. With hundreds of superb quality sound samples and a 48-track studio, there can be little excuse for not laying down some banging tunes. However, our attentions were also drawn to the latest offerings from two of the industry's biggest hitters. Apple's iPod maintains the musical vibe with a slinky and stylish MP3 player-cum-organiser that could be the accessory for all mobile groovers this summer. Then there's the latest version of Microsoft's MSN Messenger. This sixth instalment is sure to be a hit with online talkers, offering enhanced Webcam support and multi-player games.

Mark Billen, Staff Writer

On test this issue...

112 **MSN Messenger 6**
Take control of IM like never before with MSN's latest client

116 **Packard Bell iMedia 5087**
Get up and running in no time with this ADSL-enabled PC

117 **eJay Techno 4**
It's got the brains, but do you have the power to create banging tunes?

119 **Apple iPod 15Gb**
We put the sweetest MP3 player around through its musical paces

120 **eScan 2003**
Protect yourself from all manner of nasties with this intuitive package

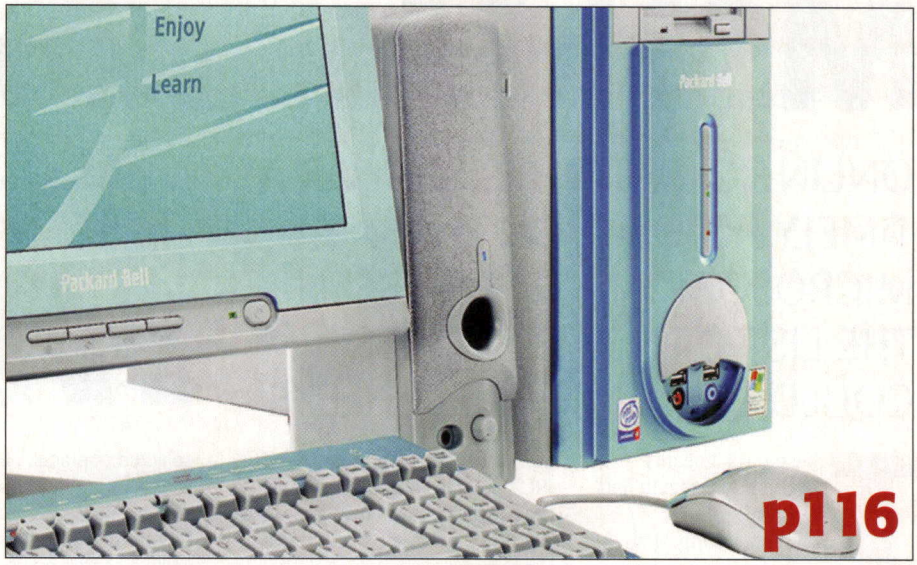
122 **PlexWriter Premium**
We shed a tear as Plextor unveils its last ever CD-writer to the world

122 **PhotoLab Express**
We road test this low-priced alternative to Paint Shop Pro

How our ratings work

Practical internet ★★ STAR BUY ★★ — A truly excellent product you should buy now. Given to scores of 90% or above

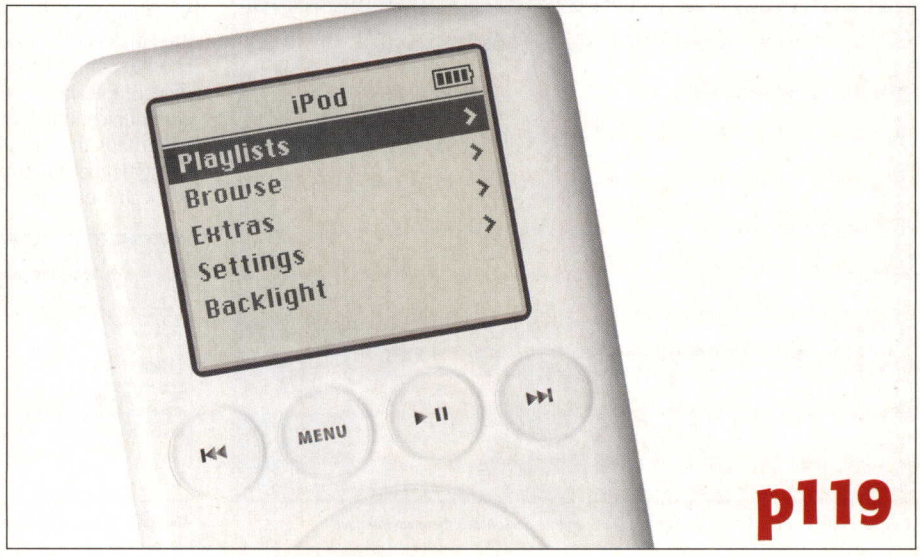
Practical internet RECOMMENDED — It's great, but not totally essential to your well-being. 85% or above



p116

TECHNO 4
MUSIC CREATION
CREATE YOUR MUSIC NOW!
4000 NEW TECHNO SAMPLES 48 TRACK ARRANGER
5 VIRTUAL INSTRUMENTS 15 REAL TIME EFFECTS

p117



p119

MSN Messenger 6.0

ONLINE CHATTING IS SET FOR A TIMELY REVOLUTION WITH MICROSOFT'S LATEST MESSENGER. THE LIST OF NEW FEATURES COULD LEAVE YOU SPEECHLESS

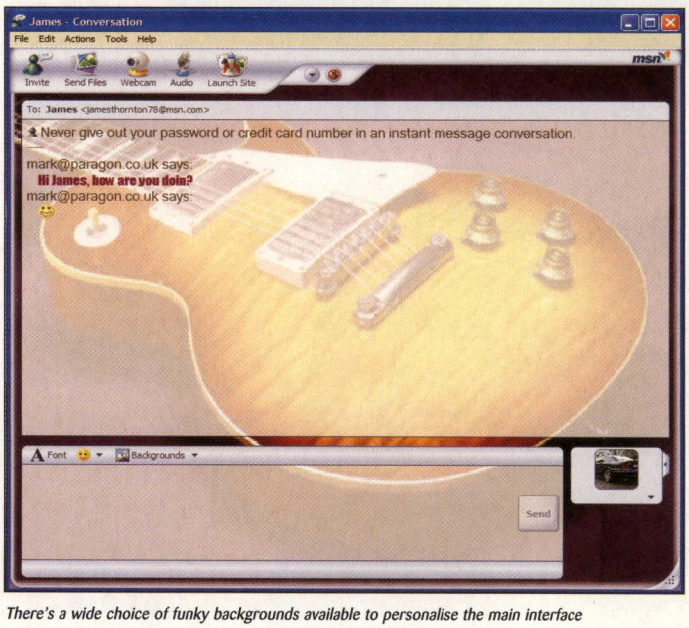
Practical internet ★★ STAR BUY ★★

msn™

These days it seems everybody wants to find new ways of communicating. With the widespread use of email and the explosion of mobile phones, the good old face-to-face exchange is becoming a rarity. Okay, it may not be quite that bad, but the point is that remote forms of talking have come a long way from stringed-together yoghurt pots or walkie-talkies.

However, one of the Internet's boom darlings was IRC chat, and despite the many online forums still buzzing, it has largely been left behind. Those on slower connections soon found their conversations swamped under a barrage of updating text, or simply that the whole process became too tedious. But with faster and broader connections coming to the fore, IRC's potential began to grow with the possibilities for audio and video support. Clients such as Yahoo's Pager had already moved Web chatting away from clumsy rooms onto the desktop, so the experience had grown more personal.

Microsoft, never one to miss a trick, soon cottoned on to where this new way of bringing people together could lead, and its MSN Messenger series has proven immensely popular. Version 6 is the very latest, and it hopes to continue the IRC renaissance with top new features. By exploiting a huge Hotmail and MSN user base, members can download the software and hook up with others across the globe. They can invite new friends for a private gas-bag or hold an exclusive meeting for selected contacts, all within a tidy window. Pop-up messages and status details let you know which of your favourite pals is connected, while a search engine allows you to trawl through user profiles for anyone you, er, fancy. Nothing new there, you may think, and the essential premise of text-based messaging is fairly traditional, bar a few tweaks, but the exciting aspect is the choice. Messenger 6 is a multimedia beast in all senses, and couples old-school IRC tricks with some really fresh ideas.

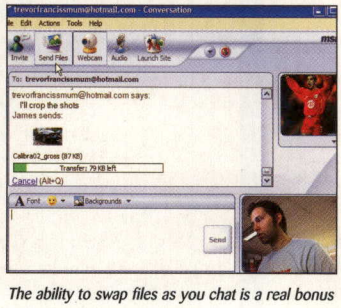

James - Conversation
File Edit Actions Tools Help
Invite Send Files Webcam Audio Launch Site
msn
To: James <jamesthornton78@msn.com>
Never give out your password or credit card number in an instant message conversation.
mark@paragon.co.uk says:
Hi James, how are you doin?
mark@paragon.co.uk says:
Font Backgrounds
Send

There's a wide choice of funky backgrounds available to personalise the main interface

Ascii's so passé...

The frustrating thing about most technological breakthroughs is that they remain mutually exclusive. Why do we so often have to have dozens of solutions for the same problem scattered between different devices or bits of software? This is perhaps a motivating question behind what Microsoft has done with this latest Messenger. Once you download the application and get started, it soon becomes obvious that the meagre interface is effectively a communications hub.

Perhaps the most eye-catching facility is that for streaming Webcam content. After selecting an acquaintance from your Contacts list, you are presented with a customisable forum space where standard text chat is displayed. There are also a couple of boxes which can be used to display chosen images that your friends will also see. These can be used to sum up mood or identify you, but are primarily intended for displaying video pictures.



The ability to swap files as you chat is a real bonus

It's amazing the way simply hitting the Webcam button takes care of everything, provided your camera is set up correctly. There is one pane for previewing your own camera's images while another shows any incoming footage. What's nice is that you don't need to be chatting to have a play, and although video support is intended to be two-way, it doesn't have to be.

The quality is very good too and display sizes can be changed easily, but slower connections will suffer a jerky *Max Headroom* effect or delay. If you don't have a camera, don't worry, because picking your own static photos and graphics is fun, especially when you can swap them with your mates. A Send Files button is ingenious here because not only can you transfer GIFS and JPEGS, but anything else, including MP3s etc.

This adds a whole new dimension to Messenger, making it akin to a more social peer-to-peer network if you like. It also has the good grace to inform you of the file transfer process in the Chat pane, so you can see who's sending what and how much has been delivered.

Perhaps the coolest thing about Messenger after video chatting is

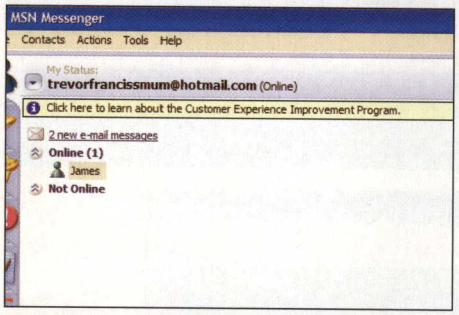
easily talking for real. The two go hand in hand really, but having that option to speak via a microphone really wakes you up to how useful the application is. You might have friends or loved ones scattered around obscure foreign countries and baulk at the cost of phoning them. It'll require a PC and Internet access at the other end, but to be able to talk and watch on local call rate, or even free, depending on connection, is a real treat. Speech quality is again dictated by connection, but if streaming is fast enough to match telephone yakking, it's more than adequate. It's also worth mentioning that Messenger will let you dial a phone line and send messages to mobile devices, at the cost of the call. This additional functionality needs setting up by both parties, but reminds you of the power on offer.

"THIS IS A REAL MULTIMEDIA BEAST, COUPLED WITH SOME OLD-SKOOL IRC TRICKS"

Cleverly, Microsoft has realised that all this new-age support could render the keyboard chitchat redundant, and the Text window is never wasted as a display for status or error messages. It's also supplied a great bunch of 'emoticons' or graphical smileys that can be a humorous way of conveying a

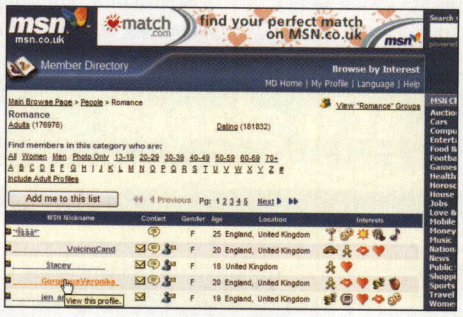
A range of fun-filled multiplayer games includes classics like Solitaire, Minesweeper and many more

A tour around the Messenger 6 interface



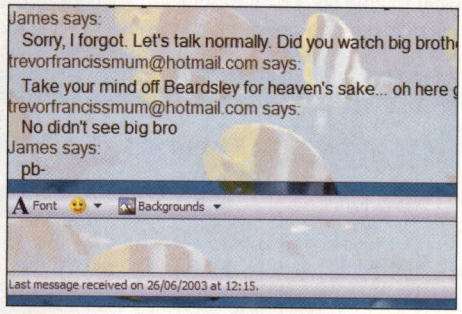
1 The Launch window

The main Launch window is used for assembling all your contacts and letting you know who's currently online. You can click on a name to send a quick message if you don't want a full-on chat, or drop them an email.



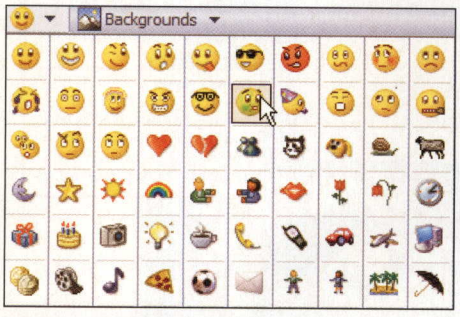
2 Find new friends

The MSN network lets you search through a database of its members to find new friends. You can browse a number of groups for sports, music and romance, making it perfect for those seeking chat or relationships.


James says:
Sorry, I forgot. Let's talk normally. Did you watch big broth
trevorfrancissmum@hotmail.com says:
Take your mind off Beardsley for heaven's sake... oh here
trevorfrancissmum@hotmail.com says:
No didn't see big bro
James says:
pb-
Font
Backgrounds
Last message received on 26/06/2003 at 12:15.

3 The Forum window

Conversations take place in a main Forum window. You can change the background graphics, and all chat text is clearly displayed in the scrolling pane. A simple textbox accepts your input, and features are accessed above.

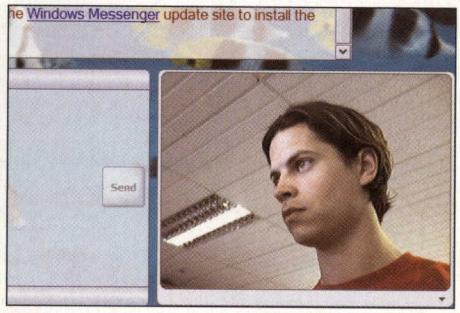


4 Emoticons

A large collection of emoticons is easily accessible for adding a touch of humour and expression to your messages. You can download new ones or alternatively just use images you already have.

5 Define your identity

When the Webcam's not rolling, you can choose a funky little image to define your identity. Other chatters will see it and you'll see theirs, and similarly you can decide to add your own pictures as well as those supplied.



6 Preview the footage

When the Webcam is rolling, you see an excellent preview box of the live footage. This is easily resized and lets you know whether your friends are seeing your 'best side'. You also get another one for spying on your fellow chatters.

msn Today
Search the Web
BIG BROTHER
Gos has finally been nominated for eviction from the BB house. But which other two housemates join him?
ENTERTAINMENT:
Sexiest celebrity couple
Blue vs Blue dispute settled
Church's film flops
At the movies
Bruce Almighty: trailer
2 Fast 2 Furious: trailer
Top 10 DVDs: compare prices
Love tips
10 ways to flirt
The art of online dating
How to get your man
MSN's news service will bring you plenty of gossip

reaction. Apart from the obvious expressive cartoon faces, you can add favourite images from your hard drive too. Messenger allows you to give them unique phrases that will automatically insert them into your sentences when typed. Similarly, fonts and text effects can quickly be added to spice things up and you can tailor the interface with a selection of background skins.

Game on

There is a real co-operative vibe to this version of Messenger. If you want to chill out with your online buddies but don't have much to say, don't despair. First you could chew the fat over a whistle-stop tour of your favourite Web sites. You can arrange to get together and visit the same URLs simultaneously and even see your partner's cursor flicking between links. You will both need an MSN 8 account, which could be viewed as a cynical ploy, but it is rather impressive. If that's not what you're after though, you and your friends could have a mass doodle with the Whiteboard feature. Then there's program sharing, which enables either party to access another's applications remotely. This is a neat little touch that could prove just as valuable within working scenarios.

"THERE IS AN OBVIOUS CO-OPERATIVE VIBE TO THIS VERSION OF MESSENGER"

If you're still not satisfied though, *TM* Messenger's trump card has to be its array of multiplayer games. Windows classics such as Solitaire and Minesweeper are all there for you to battle your friends with, and it works. You just pick your poison from the menu and specify who you want to challenge, and then wait briefly for them to accept. The games are turn-based, so timing isn't too strict, and being able to type abuse, shout taunts and see your opponents grimace is a hoot.

MSN Messenger 6 is a really terrific program that manages to deliver an awful lot in a relatively small package. The methods of communication you have at your disposal, from email to IRC to video conferencing and mobile support, is staggering. When you throw file sharing and gaming into the mix, you just rejoice in a piece of software that genuinely entertains.

Not all of us are veterans in using Webcams, so while fiddling with those features was great,we found that simply sending silly text messages was just as much fun. The program is also full of thoughtful touches, like a prompt telling you your friends are currently typing you messages, so you know they haven't vanished. The interface isn't astounding, but it's of a quality and simplicity that will charm younger and older users alike. ■

The verdict

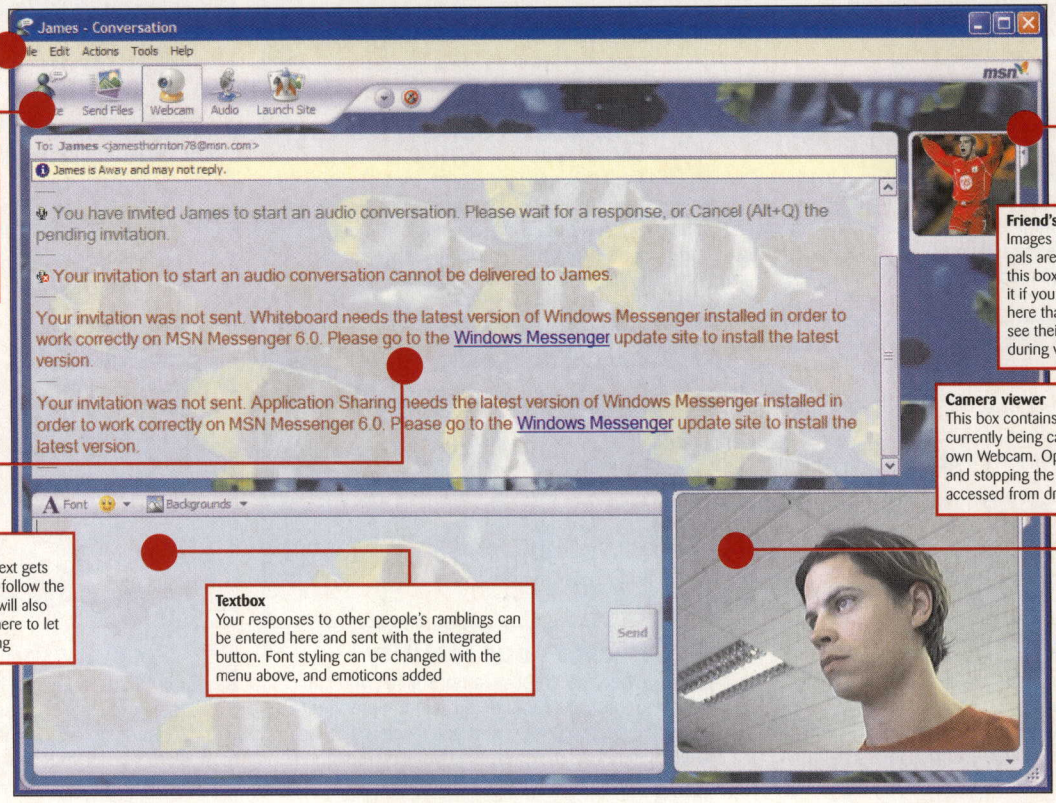
SOFTWARE: MSN Messenger 6.0
PRICE: Free
TEL: 0870 60 10 100
URL: www.messenger.msn.co.uk

FEATURES: ★★★★★
EASE OF USE: ★★★★½
VALUE: ★★★★★
OVERALL **92%**

✔ One of the best adverts for a Web connection and camera around. Great fun

✖ Not many, but users with slower access may have problems with some features

MSN Messenger 6 at a glance


James - Conversation
File Edit Actions Tools Help
Send Files
Webcam
Audio
Launch Site
To: James <jamesthornton78@msn.com>
James is Away and may not reply.
You have invited James to start an audio conversation. Please wait for a response, or Cancel (Alt+Q) the pending invitation.
Your invitation to start an audio conversation cannot be delivered to James.
Your invitation was not sent. Whiteboard needs the latest version of Windows Messenger installed in order to work correctly on MSN Messenger 6.0. Please go to the Windows Messenger update site to install the latest version.
Your invitation was not sent. Application Sharing needs the latest version of Windows Messenger installed in order to work correctly on MSN Messenger 6.0. Please go to the Windows Messenger update site to install the latest version.
Font
Backgrounds
Send

Menu bar
The File menu lets you save conversations and send files. The Actions drop-down is the main place for starting games, sending emails and sharing programs

Dashboard
Here you can invite friends to join you and initiate Webcam or voice conversations, all at the touch of a button

Chat pane
This is where all the chat text gets displayed, allowing you to follow the conversation. Messenger will also provide status messages here to let you know what's happening

Textbox
Your responses to other people's ramblings can be entered here and sent with the integrated button. Font styling can be changed with the menu above, and emoticons added

Friend's image
Images from your chat pals are displayed in this box. You can close it if you desire, but it's here that you'll get to see their Webcam during video exchanges

Camera viewer
This box contains the action currently being captured by your own Webcam. Options for resizing and stopping the filming are accessed from drop-down menus

Training
at your own pace

CD-ROMs
Adobe Acrobat
Learning Acrobat 5
Adobe After Effects
Learning After Effects 5
Adobe GoLive
Learning GoLive 6
Adobe InDesign
Learning Adobe InDesign 2
Adobe Illustrator
Learning Illustrator 9
Learning Illustrator 10
Adobe Photoshop
New in Photoshop 7
Advanced Photoshop 6
Learning Photoshop 6
Learning ImageReady 3 for the Web
Learning Photoshop Elements
Amorphium Pro
Learning Amorphium Pro
Macromedia Director
Learning Director 8.5
Macromedia Dreamweaver
Learning Dreamweaver 4
Learning Dreamweaver MX
Intermediate Dreamweaver 4
Intermediate Dreamweaver MX
Learning UltraDev 4
Macromedia Fireworks
Learning Fireworks 4
Learning Fireworks MX
Macromedia Flash
Learning Flash 5
Learning Flash MX
Intermediate Flash 5
Intermediate Flash MX
Advanced Flash 5
Learning ActionScript with Flash MX
Animation Principles with Flash 5
Optimizing Flash 5
QuarkXPress
Learning QuarkXPress 5
QuickTime
Learning QuickTime Pro 5
QuickTime Compression Principles
Operating Systems
Learning Mac OSX 10.2 Jaguar
Learning Microsoft Windows XP
Programming
Learning CSS 2
Learning JavaScript
Learning HTML
Learning XHTML
Using Perl/CGI Scripts
Typography
Typographic Principles

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Packard Bell iMedia 5087

PROVIDING A GATEWAY TO WARP SPEED INTERNET, THE IMEDIA 5087 BECOMES THE FIRST PACKARD BELL MACHINE TO BE LOADED WITH AN ADSL MODEM

Considering the amount of hype surrounding broadband, a baby dolphin could probably tell you what ADSL is all about by now. Thankfully, PC manufacturers are starting to realise the benefits of high-speed Internet too, and many have begun releasing broadband-ready machines into the market.

The latest entrant, and Packard Bell's first foray into this area, is the iMedia 5087, which comes with a built-in ADSL modem in an effort to play into the hands of an increasingly bandwidth-hungry nation. The company has also climbed into bed with a couple of the UK's biggest ISPs to offer some interesting exclusive broadband deals. As a result, you get the option of taking out two month's free ADSL subscription with AOL or a £10 subscription discount every month for six months with Freeserve. While this may not ultimately turn you into a millionaire, it makes for an appetising deal for anyone looking to buy a new PC specifically to get high-speed Net access – assuming, that is, the machine's any good.

While it looks like it's borrowed somewhat from the Sony VAIO or some of the recent Dell machines in its styling, the 5087 is pretty attractive. Cased in grey and blue, the base unit makes use of a rather atmospheric blue neon light around the power switch, which is pretty space-age. The 15-inch monitor is also styled in the same form and looks like a portable TV, though we can't work out whether that's good or bad.

What's in the box

Ugly people get sick of hearing that it's what's inside that counts, and the same can be said of PCs. Whatever you think of its looks, any PC will inevitably live or die by what's on the inside, and thankfully the iMedia has bags of personality. Probably its most redeeming feature is its 2.6GHz Pentium 4 processor, which allows it to handle the mightiest Web creation packages on the planet without breaking sweat. Add to this 256Mb of DDR RAM and an 80Gb hard drive, and you have a machine that's able to cope with most eventualities, whether you use it for editing digital images, creating music or simply browsing the Web.

Staying on the subject of surfing, the iMedia's keyboard comes with an Internet button which allows you to call up your browser with a single touch, albeit that Internet Explorer is annoyingly splashed with Packard Bell branding. It also features a range of similar quick-keys including media player controls, a TV-Out button and an Activ Support feature. While the addition of these buttons can save a little time, the fact that the function keys have been set up to explain what your Packard Bell computer can do in terms of games, music, searching etc, smacks of an Eighties-style educational computer.

Get hooked

In terms of connectivity and expandability, the 5087 comes with an ample array of ports for you to stretch the capabilities of your PC. As well as the two USB ports round the back of the machine, there are two housed at the front, along with a Firewire slot, which are hidden behind a rather gimmicky rotatable plastic disc, which looks as if it might snap off after some serious usage.

Other features worth noting include a 64Mb DDR Geforce 4 MX 440 graphics card, a DVD/CD Re-Writer Combo and one of those old floppy drive things.

The software piled into the bundle is far from inspiring, but like the PC as a whole, will suit families with young children or those who are new to computing and the Net. As well as WinXP Home Edition, you get Microsoft Works 7, Encyclopaedia Britannica, GCSE Maths and Science, Norton Internet Security, Photo Express and Zoo Tycoon.

Although its away-from-the-norm design and idiot-proof features may not be everyone's cup of tea, there's no disputing the fact that £799 represents great value for what is a pretty powerful machine providing a fast track to a broadband connection. ■

The verdict

PRODUCT: Packard Bell iMedia 5087
PRICE: From £799
TEL: 01628 512456
URL: www.packardbell.co.uk

FEATURES:	★★★★★	**OVERALL**
EASE OF USE:	★★★★★	**79%**
VALUE:	★★★★★	

✔ Decent performing broadband-ready machine

✖ The design might not appeal to everyone

ejay Techno 4

BIG FISH, LITTLE FISH, CARDBOARD BOX! GO ALL PETE TONG WITH ONE OF THE GROOVIEST NEW DANCE COMPOSERS CURRENTLY CUTTING THE RUG

Music's anti-hero Morrissey sang 'Hang the DJ' in The Smith's 1986 classic '*Panic*' – he probably had good reason. Alright, he was a moaner, but it wasn't long ago that being a disc jockey equated to someone's 'wacky' dad dressing up like Jimmy Saville and spinning '*Come On Eileen*' at weddings or bar mitzvahs. These days DJs are cool superstars, with the record deck replacing the electric guitar and everyone wanting to be a vinyl wizard. This has given rise to an influx of PC-based production packages that allow bedroom wannabes mix their own dance tracks. The popular eJay has established itself in this very market, with Techno 4 its latest offering.

Too good to be true?

Arriving on two CD-ROMs, Techno 4 not only comes with a glowing reputation but a veritable stack of features. With 4,000 original samples and a 48-track studio environment to arrange them, the whole thing seems too good to be true – and there is a catch. Music applications are notoriously hungry on processing resources and this example is no different. If you want this package to run, and fast enough to make it worthwhile, make sure your processor and memory are up to specification. We foolishly tried it on a machine with only half the 256Mb of RAM, and although it ran, it wasn't happy. However, there were no such difficulties after swapping to a manlier terminal, and Techno 4 began to shine.

eJay's Techno 4 has a beautiful and uncluttered interface, together with a large array of features

The first thing that strikes you with this program is the quite beautiful and uncluttered interface. Loading up one of the many example compositions for the first time, you're not only amazed by the professional sound quality but the onscreen antics too. Sure, there's a facility for synchronising more sophisticated 3D effects into mock music videos, but the basic look of the thing has you transfixed. The hedonistic heights of Ibiza don't seem so far away as you bob to the beat and watch tetris-like blocks zooming toward you. It's also nice to see a styling that breaks the Windows conventions and adopts a video game look.

Mash it up...

The library of factory samples is without doubt excellent, and although the vocal ones can be a bit cheesy, they are refreshingly usable. They are also royalty-free which means anything produced with them can be distributed commercially with no worries.

Starting from scratch is where Techno 4 really excels though, with drum loop, bass line and synth generators that can be played using the keyboard. It's all kept very simple and the ability to preview samples as you build them is nice. There's also plenty of tomfoolery to be had with a text-based speech generator that's surprisingly good. CD grabbing is possible for sampling or remixing your favourite tunes and all your efforts are easily exported to WAV or MP3 formats.

On the whole, it's all been put together skilfully but there are a few niggles that disappoint. The funky styling, although very pretty, can confuse, with poor tool tips and dodgy icons. All credit goes for trying to simplify a tricky process, but the lack of any instruction for basic actions is a pity. This finds you reaching for the manual a lot, and that in itself isn't great. Trial and error eventually gets you through, and it really does require time to achieve decent results. Nevertheless, Techno 4 remains one of the most proficient and accessible music generators seen so far. ■

The verdict

PRODUCT: eJay Techno 4
PRICE: £29.99
TEL: 020 8492 1030
URL: www.ejay.co.uk

FEATURES: ★★★★☆
EASE OF USE: ★★★☆☆
VALUE: ★★★★☆
OVERALL **87%**

✔ The large array of features, professional sound and cool looks make this a winner

✘ Navigating the interface can be confusing, with little in the way of beginner instruction

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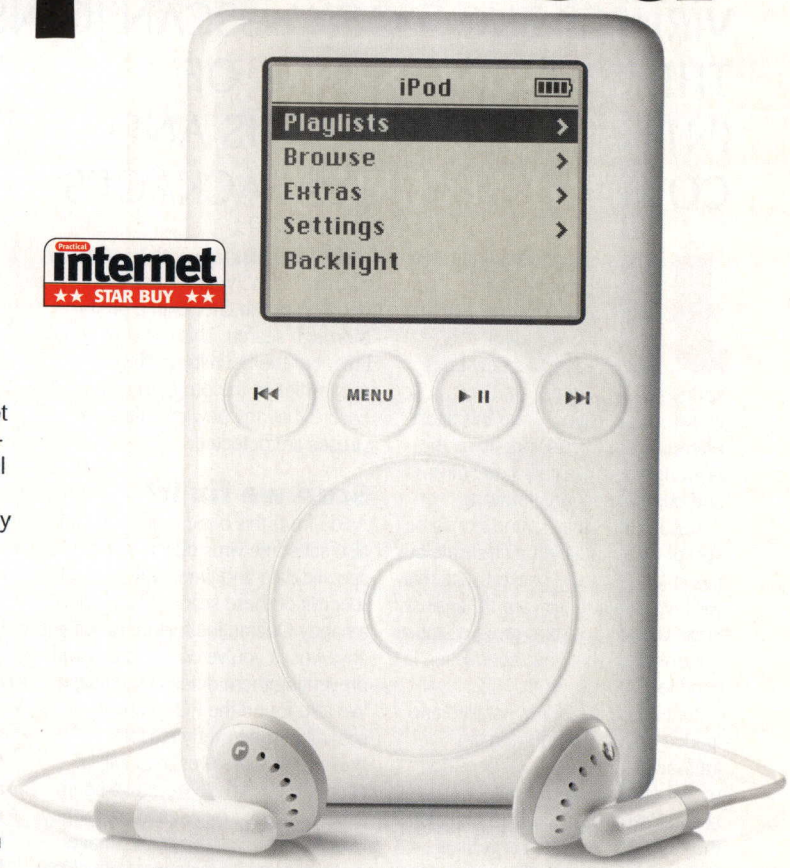
Issue 12
THE NUMBER ONE WEB CREATIVITY TOOL

Practical Web Projects is the magazine for people who want to master the latest Web creation software. Each issue takes an in-depth look at a leading Web design program and shows you how to build amazing Web sites and create stunning graphics

15Gb Apple iPod

CAN THE SECOND INCARNATION OF THE IPOD REPLICATE THE SUCCESS OF ITS PREDECESSOR, OR IS APPLE'S DIGITAL MUSIC PLAYER DESTINED TO BE A ONE-HIT WONDER? WE RUN THE RULE



Practical internet ★★ STAR BUY ★★

We all gasped when Apple unveiled the iPod. A digital music player that sounded great and looked good? Now that was progress. Then came a minor upgrade, adding extra drive space for the more discerning MP3 buff and introducing a rudimentary contact management feature.

Now, with the second incarnation of the iPod, Apple has upped the ante further still, with a major revision to the iPod's form factor, oodles of drive space and some smart new features.

Despite knowing the dimensions in advance, the slim-line build came as quite a shock when we first cradled it in our hands. But it's what the new iPod looks like rather than its dimensions that will stop most people dead in their tracks. The familiar white fascia and silver back may remain, but they look even better in this latest incarnation. The old scroll wheel has been replaced with a touch-sensitive dial. And, as if that wasn't enough, the touch-sensitive buttons now illuminate and glow red when the iPod is backlit.

In addition to being portable and stylish, the new iPod is also easier to use, thanks to a new docking cradle (not available in the entry-level model). This cunning device connects to your Mac or PC and allows the songs on your iPod to be instantly updated, or the iPod's battery to be recharged whenever it is plugged in. And while we're on the subject of batteries, the rechargeable cell built into the iPod is superb, offering ten hours of play.

However, ease of use is one thing, but let us not forget that the iPod should be judged primarily on its ability to reproduce sound. And sound quality, we have to concede, is exceptional for a digital music player. Trainspotters will no doubt rejoice at support for the up-and-coming music format AAC, as will those keen to start using the iTunes Music Store (currently only available to US readers) to stock up on quality downloads.

A double life

The iPod also doubles up as any one of a number of useful tools. Change the preferences in your music software and you've got a portable hard drive on your hands. Dip into the Extras menu on the iPod interface, and you've got a contact management tool in your palm and the ability to store and read text files while on the move. You can even play games on the iPod – not that this limited feature will cause the mullahs over at Sony and Nintendo to lose much sleep.

One aspect that will infuriate is the inability to transfer music from iPod to computer. Apple, it seems, is happy to let you cram as many songs as you want onto your iPod, but it doesn't want you to be able to get them off again.

This means that transferring music between two computers is impossible, unless you do it in Disk mode or download a third-party script from the Web. It's a concession Apple has obviously made to the major record labels in order to gain their support for the iTunes Music Store, but it's an annoyingly futile one all the same.

Another major criticism is that Apple is marketing the iPod as a Windows-compatible device, when a Firewire card is needed in order to actually use it. In fairness to Apple, USB 2.0 support is on its way and a custom cable will shortly be available for precisely this purpose.

Hefty price tag

Another area where the iPod loses out is value for money. At £299 for 15Gb of storage, it's still some way behind its nearest competitor in the PC market, the Creative Zen, which costs £300 for 20Gb of drive space. But then, a Volvo estate is more spacious and cheaper than a Ferrari – yet the Ferrari is still a Ferrari.

This is without a doubt the best portable digital music player on the market. PC users, however, have a difficult choice. Without USB 2.0 support and a PC version of iTunes, it's difficult for Windows advocates to feel anything other than second-class customers. Perhaps then, if you're a PC buff, it's best to wait until Apple has got everything shipshape and Cupertino fashion for the Windows platform. And when that moment comes, get ready to storm the doors to PC World. ■

The verdict

PRODUCT: 15Gb Apple iPod
PRICE: £299
TEL: 0800 039 1010
URL: www.apple.com/uk

FEATURES: ★★★★★
EASE OF USE: ★★★★★
VALUE: ★★★★½
OVERALL 91%

✔ Small, stylish, flexible and offers superb sound quality

✘ Not USB 2.0 ready yet and still relatively expensive

eScan 2003

DESIGNED TO HELP YOU GIVE VIRUSES THE ELBOW, eSCAN JOINS THE GROWING RANKS OF INTEGRATED ANTIVIRUS AND CONTENT SECURITY PACKAGES

Just when you thought it was safe to open an email attachment, along comes yet another virus threat.

However, just as new bugs spring up all the time, so it seems do antivirus applications, and this latest offering from MicroWorld joins the growing ranks of integrated antivirus and content security software.

eScan 2003 may sound like some sort of recreational drug amnesty, but it is in fact a feature-packed suite that will help you firm up your PC against email virus attacks and give you more control over what your connection is used for.

Once the program's installed and loaded up, you'll see the main interface, which might not be the most beautiful thing in the world, but serves its purpose well. It contains all the tools you need to rid viruses from your machine, allowing you to select each function in the sidebar to call up a series of options in the main window. The main feature you'll need here is the Analysis option, which lets you set up a scan of your system by selecting the drives, folders and files you wish to scan. By clicking 'Scan', your system will undergo all the checks in a pretty thorough search. This can take some time, but the heuristic analysis capabilities of the program help to ensure that any new or unknown viruses are detected.

Scan we fix it?

Aside from this basic scan, you can also schedule virus checks for a specific date and time, and print off records of these scans. There's even a handy Quarantine feature for caging any viruses you've come across and preventing them doing any damage. We also found the POP3 email scanning to be pretty reliable – having sent ourselves a couple of nasty viruses, these were picked up and disinfected by eScan before they had the chance to do real damage.

Aside from its main virus-checking capabilities, eScan 2003 also comes with a number of extra security tools which are tucked away on the System Tray icon rather than integrated into the main interface. You'll find a useful array of options including a Content Filter, which allows you to grant or block access to Web sites based on a certain theme or containing certain rude words. There's also an Email Attachment Control for blocking attachments of a particular type, a simple yet effective pop-up filter and a browser clean-up tool which helps remove evidence of your Net activity by clearing out your browser cache, history and the like.

Although its design and navigation system is a little clunky, eScan 2003 makes up for this in performance, disposing of just about any bug you can throw at it and providing access to a range of useful security tools. ■

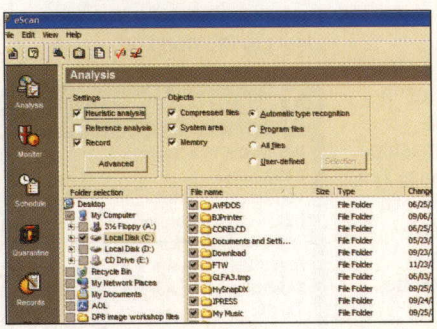
The verdict

PRODUCT: eScan 2003
PRICE: £49.99
TEL: 08705 275 186
URL: www.softwair.co.uk

FEATURES: ★★★★☆
EASE OF USE: ★★★★☆
VALUE: ★★★★☆
OVERALL **84%**

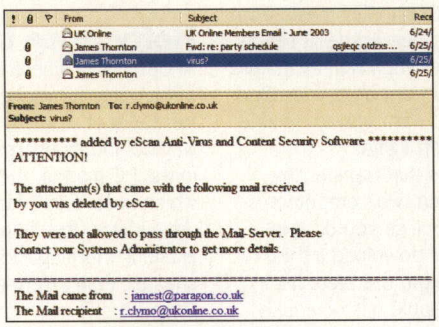
✔ Does a good job of keeping viruses at bay

✖ Not the greatest-looking interface of all time



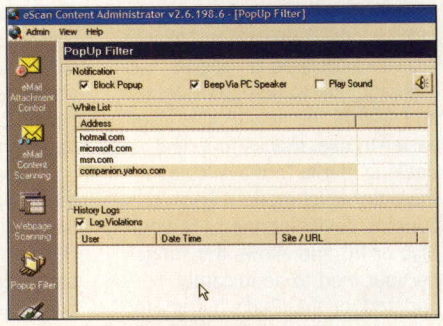
1 System analysis

The Analysis option allows you to define and perform virus scans of your system. The program's heuristic analysis capabilities ensure that it can spot viruses that aren't already known, and remove these automatically.


From
Subject
UK Online
UK Online Members Email - June 2003
James Thornton
Fwd: re: party schedule
qsjjeqc otdzxs...
James Thornton
virus?
James Thornton
From: James Thornton To: r.clymo@ukonline.co.uk
Subject: virus?
********** added by eScan Anti-Virus and Content Security Software **********
ATTENTION!
The attachment(s) that came with the following mail received by you was deleted by eScan.
They were not allowed to pass through the Mail-Server. Please contact your Systems Administrator to get more details.
The Mail came from : jamest@paragon.co.uk
The Mail recipient : r.clymo@ukonline.co.uk

2 Email scanning

Messages that come into your POP3 mailbox via clients such as Outlook Express or Eudora are automatically scanned for viruses, and if a suspicious file is spotted it will not be allowed to pass through your mail server.



3 PopUp filtering

Surely one of the most annoying aspects of browsing the Web, pop-up ads have been the scourge of browsers for years. eScan's PopUp Filter allows you to block intrusive adverts while allowing through genuine pop-up windows via its White List.

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  20,000MB Data Traffic Per Month
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  UNLIMITED POP3 & WebMail Accounts
  CGI, SSI, PHP4 & ASP
  UNLIMITED Fast Web Space
  30,000MB Data Traffic Per Month
  50 MySQL or MSAccess Databases

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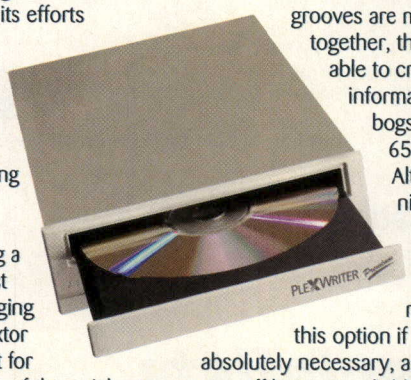
Practical Internet ★★ STAR BUY ★★

PlexWriter Premium

PLEXTOR SAYS GOODBYE TO CD WRITERS BY LAUNCHING THE KING OF THE BURNING DEVICES

As one of the most prolific players in the market, Plextor's competitors must be pretty chuffed to hear that this, its latest CD writer, will be the last one it produces. They'll be less pleased to find out that the company's parting shot before concentrating all its efforts on DVD drives promises to extend Plextor's legacy for a long time to come.



In the computing industry's equivalent of a footballer bagging a hat-trick in his last game before hanging up his boots, Plextor has saved its best for last, releasing one of the quickest drives around in the shape of the PlexWriter Premium. The device is capable of writing at a blistering 52x, rewriting at 32x, and reading CDs at an equally impressive 52x.

The drive can be a bit of a wrench to install if you aren't used to fiddling about inside your computer, but there is a readable Quick Installation Guide to help you get everything configured pretty easily, although the phrase 'Quick' must be interpreted in its loosest sense here.

The write stuff

Once your PC has recognised its new-found friend, you're laughing, and you can revel in the fact that you'll be able to burn an entire CD in little over a couple of minutes, using the Nero 5 software that comes free with the drive. Plextor's long-established BurnProof technology ensures that buffer underrun is kept to a minimum, and we experienced little in the way of problems when writing to CD or CD-RW.

Another great aspect of the Premium is the fact that it allows you to record a meaty 1.2Gb of data onto a single CD. How is this possible? you yelp. Writing onto a 99-minute CD where the grooves are much closer together, the device is able to cram more information than a bogstandard 650Mb disc. Although a nice addition to the drive, we would only recommend this option if it was absolutely necessary, as it's a long way off being as reliable as standard disc burning, and the resulting disc will not work in all CD-ROM drives.

Undeniably, the PlexWriter Premium is one of the greatest CD drives to grace Planet Earth, thanks to Plextor's familiar combination of speed and reliability, and we can only hope the company goes on to repeat its success in the DVD-recording market. ■

The verdict

PRODUCT: Plextor PlexWriter Premium
PRICE: £92.82
TEL: 0870 4293010 (www.dabs.com)
URL: www.plextor.com

FEATURES: ★★★★★
EASE OF USE: ★★★½☆
VALUE: ★★★★½
OVERALL **91%**

✔ One of the quickest, most reliable CD writers you'll encounter

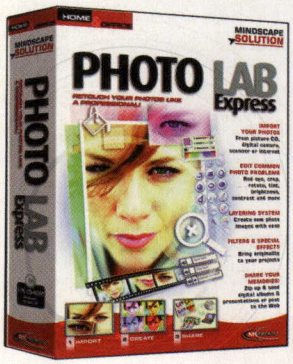
✖ The 1.2Gb CD-burning option isn't particularly foolproof

Photo Lab Express

WHO SAYS YOU NEED TO PAY TOP WHACK TO CREATE PROFESSIONAL-LOOKING DIGITAL PHOTOS?

There's little point in debating whether or not Photoshop is the best image-editing program on the market, because it is. Period. However, that's not to say we'd recommend you go out and buy it if you've just got a digital camera, or if you want to get your pictures ready for use on the Web.

That's because Adobe's market-leading product also happens to cost about the same as a second-hand Vauxhall Nova, whereas you can pick up a budget photo editor for the price of a Tonka truck. What's more, many of the high-level features you pay for in Photoshop would probably go unused by your average casual digicam hobbyist.



If it's basic image-tweaking and correction that you're after, you don't need to break the bank, as Photo Lab Express sets out to prove. Costing a shade under thirty quid, the program is designed to give you control over importing, editing and exporting your images in an easy-to-use manner.

Lab test

Photo Lab's interface is pretty simple to get to grips with, not least because of the contextual help window, which explains precisely what each tool does and how to use it as you click on it. Ease of operation is further aided by a handy History window, which allows you to view a list of the last functions you've performed and go back on yourself if you need to.

The features within the program let you perform all the common photo-fixing tasks such as red-eye removal, brightness correction and contrast. There are also a few tools that lend themselves to a certain degree of creativity, such as its intuitive layering system, which is much easier to pick up than the one found in Paint Shop. We also loved the program's Magnetic Lasso tool which significantly helps the process of selecting objects to be cut out or moved around.

While there is a smattering of filters and special effects, these pale in comparison to the range offered by more expensive photo-editing packages such as Photo Impact and Photoshop Elements, which is ultimately where Photo Lab falls down. Nevertheless, if you're looking for simple editing functionality within a beginner-friendly user interface, Photo Lab represents good value for money. ■

The verdict

PRODUCT: Photo Lab Express Desktop Pro
PRICE: £29.99
TEL: 01293 651300
URL: www.mindscape.co.uk

FEATURES: ★★★½☆
EASE OF USE: ★★★★½
VALUE: ★★★★½
OVERALL **78%**

✔ Cheap and easy to use

✖ Lacks the infinite special effects and filters of many image editors

MAKE A MINT ON THE NET

IF YOU'VE GROWN TIRED OF THE ENDLESS ADVICE ON HOW TO SAVE MONEY SURFING THE NET, WE'VE GOT THE ANTIDOTE.

IN NEXT MONTH'S MONEY-OBSESSED *PRACTICAL INTERNET*, WE FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN ACTUALLY *MAKE* MONEY ON THE INTERNET.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BUY A HOUSE, CHANGE YOUR BANK ACCOUNT, OR EVEN BUY A CHEAP DOMAIN NAME – THERE'S NO OUTLAY FROM YOU AT ALL. INSTEAD, WE PICK OUT THE NET FREEBIES THAT WILL MAKE MONEY FOR YOU, AND SHOW HOW TO TURN EVEN THE GAUDIEST OF FREE GIFTS INTO HARD CASH IN ONE WEEK...

CHECK OUT NEXT MONTH'S
PRACTICAL INTERNET
ON SALE 21 AUGUST 2003

CD contents

Welcome...

EVERY DECADE HAS its own fads that 'anyone who's anyone' must adhere to. These days you're considered a bit of an idiot if you don't have your own Web site.

This faux-pas is easier to rectify than you might think, and you don't need a huge talent to create a striking Web presence. We've pushed the boat out this issue to help you turn your online dreams into reality.

Your full version of Serif DrawPlus 4 allows you to easily build impressive pages using its intuitive graphic design tools. It also comes with stylish templates to get you started.

If you yearn for more authoring power, why not try your hand at Dreamweaver MX using the professionally compiled video tutorials on this month's disc? Happy designing!

Lee Cornish, Multimedia Editor
lee@paragon.co.uk

How to use the disc

The minimum recommended specification to run the *Practical Internet* CD is 800 X 600 screen resolution, 32Mb RAM, 16-bit colour, Windows 95/98/Me, Intel Pentium or compatible P166. We recommend that all users shut down all other applications while running the CD.

The CD will autorun in Windows 95/98. For users without autorun enabled go to the Start menu, select RUN and then type d:\PracticalInternet.exe (replacing 'd' with the letter of your CD drive) and press 'Return'.

Damaged discs
We will be pleased to replace any CD that is cracked, scratched or snapped upon purchase. Return them to the following address: Cover Disc Returns, Paragon Publishing, Paragon House, St Peter's Road, Bournemouth, BH1 2JS. If you experience technical problems, not due to physical damage on the CD, please DO NOT return any discs to us unless requested by the support team.

Missing discs
If you have purchased the magazine and have not received your CD, we will be happy to send you a replacement disc. Email **subs@paragon.co.uk** quoting the magazine and issue number, along with your full postal address and daytime phone number.

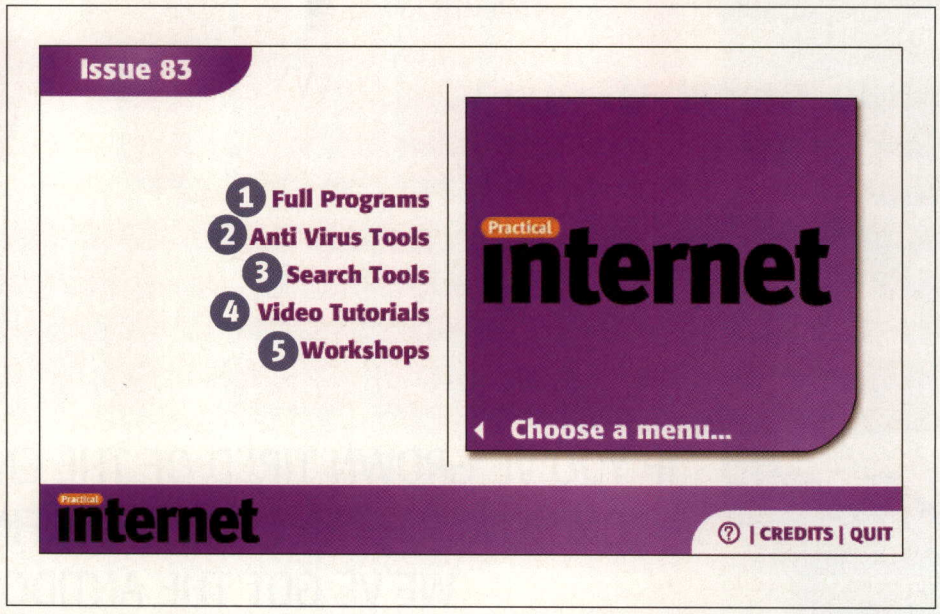
Problems using the disc
If you encounter problems using the CD or installing the software you can email **cdhelp@paragon.co.uk**. Questions will be answered twice daily. Please provide us with as much information about the technical specifications of your machine and the software errors you are receiving as well as quoting the magazine and issue number in your email. Our helpdesk team will be taking calls about disc installation problems on Wednesday afternoons between 2 and 6pm. Phone **01202 200259**.

NOTE: This service can only deal with problems when installing software from our CDs. Issues surrounding the use and purchase of software and all ISP queries must be referred to the relevant software publisher, merchant or ISP. Please note that we do not support Windows 3.1/ Windows 95/ Windows NT or Windows 2000 Operating Systems.

The CD logo

Look out for this logo in the magazine. It tells you which of the programs mentioned in features, or explored in tutorials, are on the *Practical Internet* cover CD-ROM.

On the CD this month...



1 FULL PROGRAMS

DrawPlus 4
ImageWolf 1.4
SawMill 5

Three programs to let you build great graphics, find images on the Net, and analyse complicated server logs easily.

2 ANTI-VIRUS TOOLS

Avast 4 Home Edition 4.0.211
Dr Web 4.22
McAfee Products
Panda Antivirus Platinum 7.04.01
Swatlt Trojan Scanner 1.0
Trojans First Aid Kit 5.01

Make sure you don't fall foul of Net nasties, with our collection of must-have anti-virus tools and utilities. NB: Please remember to only ever install one anti-virus program at a time. Failure to do this can cause a conflict in your Internet settings, so please uninstall each program before you try another.

3 SEARCHING TOOLS

EMS Free Surfer Companion
EZSurfer 7.3
Free Picture Finder 3.07
GeoWhere 2.11
Girafa 2.10.11
Groowe Search Toolbar 1.2
GuruNet Free 4.2
Internet Researcher
Medusa 1.1
Net Snippets 2.6
PaqRat 2.4
Subject Search Spider 3.0
SurfSaver 2.3
The eXact Search Bar 1.1
UCMore The Search Accelerator 3.0
WebFerret 5.0

Find what you want on the Net, when you want it, with the help of our mammoth collection of searching utilities. You'll find everything here from programs to help with research through to tools that simplify and improve the whole searching process. Whatever you're looking for on the Net, you're bound to get hold of it much quicker once you've installed a couple of these tools.

4 VIDEO TUTORIALS

Lynda.com Dreamweaver MX

Have you ever wanted to be a Dreamweaver expert, but could never find the right people to teach you how it's done? Well, worry no more, for we have teamed up with the wonderful people at Lynda.com to offer you a cool 57 minutes of Dreamweaver MX video tutorials – that's ten in total, taking you from the basics of setting up a site through to more advanced topics. If ever an hour could make a positive difference to your life, this is it. Get yourself a cup of tea, sit back, and get ready to improve your knowledge.

5 WORKSHOPS

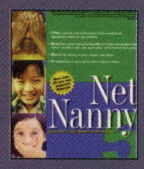
Adobe Acrobat 5.5
Amigo DVD Ripper
Auction Sentry 2.2.0
BayCheck 2.0
CloneDVD 1.22
DeepAnalysis 1.8
Desktop Detective 2000 Pro Edition
Dreamweaver MX
eBay Auction Builder 2.1
eBay Typo Auction Locator 1.0
eBay Watcher 1.0
Flash MX
Flash MX Workshop files
HotBidz 1.1a
JavaScript Workshop files
Netnanny
OpenAuction Ticker for eBay 1.0
Trillian 0.74

Here, you'll find all the files you need to follow this month's bumper workshops sections. From Web-building essentials like Dreamweaver and Flash MX through to browsing must-haves like our eBay add-ons collection, we have everything you need to get the most from the Net. If you see the 'It's on the CD' logo on a workshop page, you'll find the program on the disc.

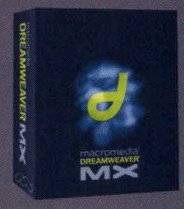
Try these

Flash MX, Trial
The driving force behind some of the most exciting and original content on the Web, Flash MX gives you the power to dazzle your visitors with impressive graphics and animation.

Net Nanny 5, Trial
If you're worried about what your kids are up to on the Net, install Net Nanny for that ever-elusive peace of mind. With a wealth of filtering functions, Net Nanny guarantees that your youngsters only get to see what you want them to see.



Dreamweaver MX, Trial
If you're none too keen on hand coding your Web pages from scratch, then Dreamweaver is arguably the best alternative. Yes, we know it's expensive, but this free 30-day trial should be enough to prove it's worth the outlay.



Dreamweaver MX video tutorials

MASTER THE IMMENSE WYSIWYG SITE-BUILDING PACKAGE BY TUNING INTO THE VIDEO WORKSHOPS ON THIS MONTH'S CD, COURTESY OF LYNDA.COM

ONE HOUR'S WORTH OF TUITION!

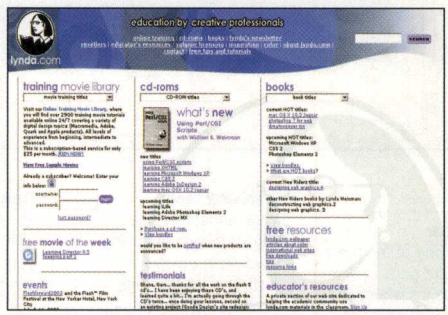
FEW PEOPLE WITHIN the dotcom industry would argue with the idea that Dreamweaver is the undisputed heavyweight champion of the Web site-creation world, thanks to its mighty range of professional editing features.

While it's a darn sight easier to use than coding your pages from scratch, the sheer scale of the program can scare off newcomers to Macromedia's flagship product. Thankfully, there are a number of resources available that can help ease you into the world of authoring with Dreamweaver.

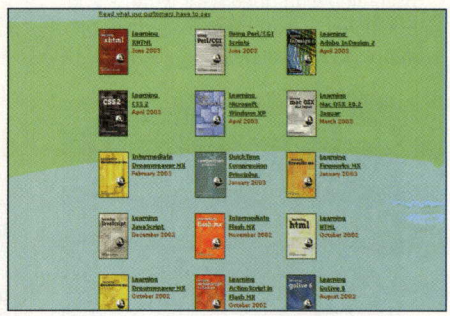
One of the best places for Dreamweaver virgins to call on is Lynda.com, a site which specialises in coaching budding Web authors to meet their full potential. As well as online training courses and books, the company also provides a number of CD-ROMs outlining how to create Web pages using a range of tools from XHTML to Flash MX. One of its greatest assets is its 'Learning Dreamweaver MX' CD, which contains a series of video tutorials highlighting the ins and outs of the program. The CD covers a wealth of topics from learning the interface to step-by-step advice on inserting media into your Web site.

We've teamed up with Lynda.com to offer you a series of video tutorials that will help turn you into a Dreamweaver wizard. The ten videos on this month's cover disc explain some of the basic principles involved in creating a site with Dreamweaver, such as defining a site and setting up tables. They go on to make more complex tasks seem as simple as eating cake, and cover techniques like making rollovers, working with layers and inserting Flash buttons into your Web pages.

If you're interested in getting hold of the complete CD of video workshops, you can buy either *Learning Dreamweaver MX* or *Intermediate Dreamweaver MX* from **www.lynda.com**.

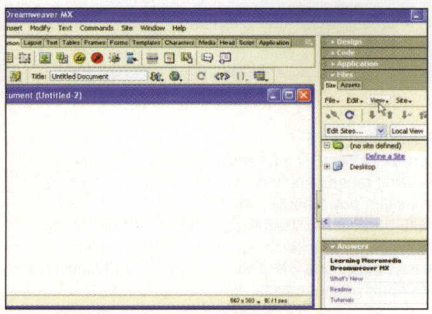


Signing up at Lynda.com will furnish you with more monthly tuition than you can shake a stick at

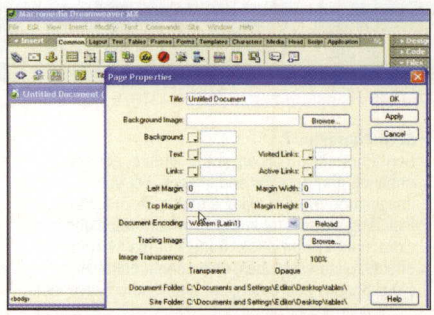


You can get yourself a thorough grounding in virtually every Web design program and technology with the help of Lynda.com

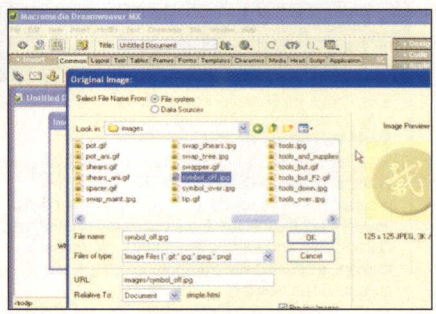
Defining a site



1 Defining a site
Video 2.01 covers defining your site in Dreamweaver MX. Follow the steps in the video to learn how to configure the program to handle all the files that will make up your site.



2 Understanding tables
In video 3.01 you will come across an easy-to-follow guide on using tables to maximum effect on your Web site, to improve the design and navigation of the pages.



3 Simple rollovers
One of the best ways to make a Web interface stand out is to apply rollover effects to the buttons on your site. Find out exactly how to do this by loading up video 8.01.

CD contents

CD highlights

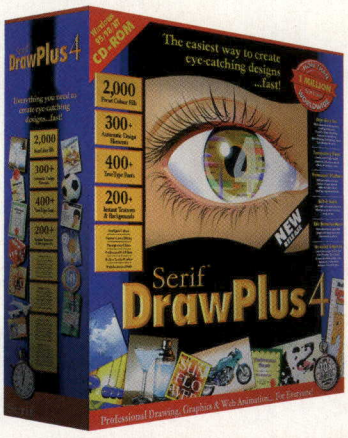
Serif DrawPlus 4.0

FULLY-WORKING PROGRAM! AS SOLD FOR £60

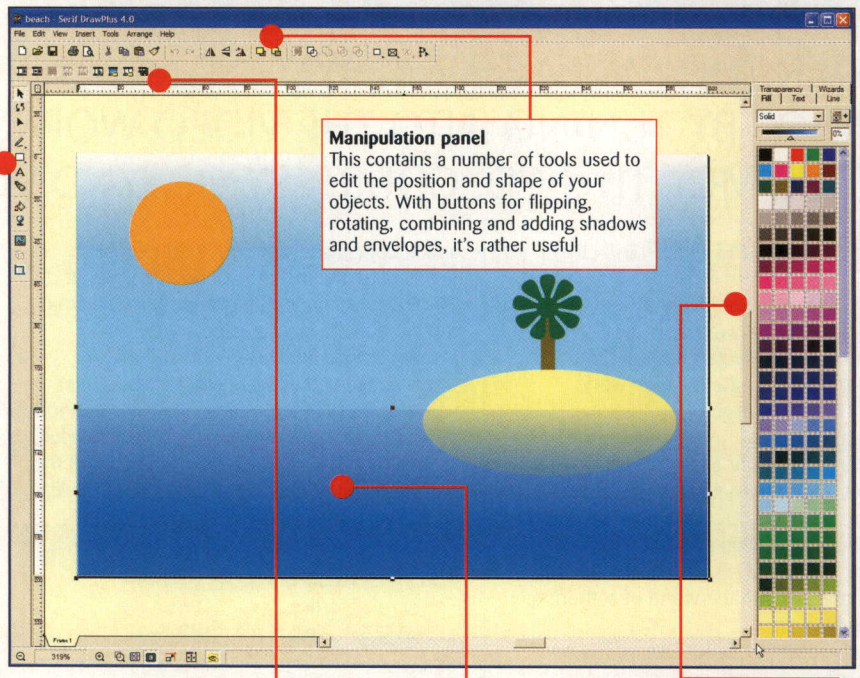
WAKE UP TO THE DELIGHTS OF VECTOR GRAPHICS WITH A DRAWING PROGRAM THAT'S PACKED TO THE HILT WITH STUNNING TEMPLATES

DRAWPLUS 4.0 IS the definitive drawing program, with its arsenal of vector-based tools making it perfect for freehand creations or shape-based artwork alike. Smooth lines and curves can be tweaked to your heart's desire, while text can be inserted and manipulated extremely freely. This also makes adding crisp colour or texture effects really easy, and it's here that DrawPlus really excels. You'll be pleasantly surprised at the results you can achieve by layering objects with semi-transparent fills and adding some funky bitmapped backgrounds. With a useful array of 'QuickShapes' to choose from and a selection of preset 'envelopes' to distort them with, the possibilities are endless.

What's more, the CD comes brimming with document wizards and templates, not to mention a stack of impressive examples.



FIND YOUR WAY AROUND DRAWPLUS 4.0



Manipulation panel
This contains a number of tools used to edit the position and shape of your objects. With buttons for flipping, rotating, combining and adding shadows and envelopes, it's rather useful

Tools bar
This is one of the most important parts because it's where all the drawing and node tools are kept. You'll also find the 'QuickShapes' menu here, along with tools for adding text and importing images

Animation tools
When animating, these buttons allow you to add new frames, clone existing ones and flick between the current set. There's also a preview button and options for setting properties

Drawing area
The drawing area or document space is where all the action takes place. It is here where your wonderful creations will take place, and can be zoomed in or out for convenience

Palette panel
Another extremely important component, the Palette not only provides menus for filling and painting, but also allows transparency to be set. The Wizard tab allows exciting backdrops to be inserted, while shape outlines and text options can also be set

Special reader offers direct from Serif

For more information on this and other fantastic Serif offers, please call: 0800 376 7070 quoting code: RO/PI/DP4/0703 Offer expires 25th August 2003

Serif PagePlus 8
Serif PagePlus 8 sets new standards in publishing power. Whether you are a designer or a DTP novice, this program has all you need to create top-quality pages. Features include multiple top-level interface, intelligent QuickShapes and rotating text frames, customisable toolbars, graduated fills, transparency effects and enhanced line drawing.

SERIF PAGEPLUS 8
(including Program CD, Design CD and Manual)
£59.99 (List price £79.99) Save £20

Serif PhotoPlus 8
Serif PhotoPlus 8 allows you to create, edit and enhance photographs and images. Let your imagination run riot using a multitude of features, including a powerful image browser, automatic image extraction, instant photo frames, funky warping effects, picture brushes, animations, editable QuickShapes and a range of high-end creative tools.

SERIF PHOTOPLUS 8
(including Program CD, Design CD and Manual)
£59.99 (List price £79.99) Save £20

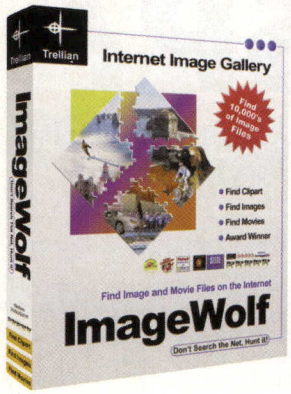
Serif DrawPlus 6
Serif DrawPlus 6 is a powerful drawing utility with an amazing range of enhancements. Features include an animation powerhouse, artistic text, a replicate tool, multi-page views, shadows and bevels, a studio page manager, picture borders, inline graphics, multiple master pages and fills. The accompanying CD includes additional instant effects.

SERIF DRAWPLUS 6
(including Program CD, Design CD and Manual)
£59.99 (List price £79.99) Save £20

SAVE £20 OR ALL 3 PRODUCTS: PAGEPLUS 8, PHOTOPLUS 8 AND DRAWPLUS 6 INCLUDING PROGRAM CDs, DESIGN CDs AND MANUALS
FOR JUST £99.95 – AN AMAZING SAVING OF ALMOST £80!

Also on this month's CD

WE'VE FULL VERSIONS APLENTY, AS WELL AS A COUPLE OF SECTIONS DEDICATED TO ELIMINATING VIRUSES FROM YOUR PC AND MAKING YOUR WEB SEARCHES EASIER THAN EVER BEFORE

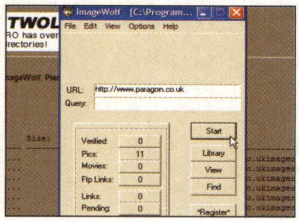


IMAGEWOLF 1.04

GET ON THE IMAGE SCENT WITH THIS HANDY INTERNET SEARCH TOOL

IT CAN OFTEN be a real headache trying to find suitable images on the Net. There's so much out there, and although most search engines will let you scan for pictures, it's not always that simple. More often than not, you end up with more dead-ends than an episode of *Miss Marple*, and you end up wishing you'd never bothered.

Now you can successfully hunt down Web graphics with ImageWolf, a really clever application that does all the scouring for you. Simply enter a query and the program will sift through the Internet and spider sites for all those elusive images in no time. An integrated filter lets you pinpoint specific file formats including JPEGs, GIFs and AVIs, although any extension of your choice can be entered. Results or matches are then listed so that files can be previewed or downloaded to your machine in batches. ImageWolf will also claw through a specified URL and pull out all the imbedded images, and spider through links containing particular text. All this functionality is bundled up within a really intuitive interface that is optimised fully to make retrieving the right images easier.



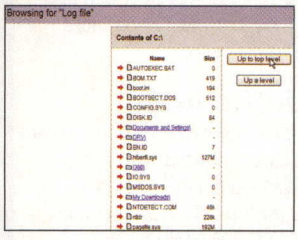
Find images on the Web really quickly with the help of ImageWolf

SAWMILL 5

CONVERT COMPLEX LOG FILE DATA INTO CONCISE REPORTS SO YOU CAN EASILY MONITOR YOUR SITE'S ACTIVITY

IF YOU RUN and host your own Web site, you may wonder how you can monitor visitor activity or establish what's hot and what's not about your URL. However, you're probably already aware that Web servers maintain log files that record a lot of information that could answer these very questions. The trouble is that these files are known to become so bloated with data that reading them directly is impossible.

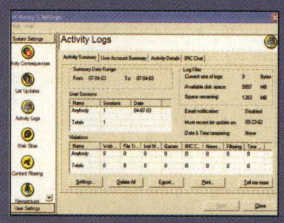
Sawmill is an application that makes this possible by interpreting the raw records and compiling a range of reports for your perusal. These include tables and graphs showing visitor domain identities, what they look at, along with access times, how long they stay and what software they use. By studying these statistics you'll be able to deduce which aspects of your site draw user interest and what action you can take to get more hits. This could range from revising your advertising strategy, changing your site's navigational structure, or providing the information people search for. We think you'll be impressed, so don't forget to check out the full copy of version five on our CD, and the trial version of number six as well.



Check up on those all-important server log files with the excellent Sawmill 5

Net Nanny offer

PROTECT YOUR KIDDIES FROM THE MURKIER SIDE OF THE NET, AND SAVE YOURSELF MONEY ON THE FULL VERSION WITH OUR READER OFFER



LEAVING YOUR KIDS to roam the Net on their own is always a bit of a risk. There are so many seedy sites out there that your youngsters are bound to occasionally stumble onto something inappropriate. Thankfully, Net Nanny exists to give you peace of mind, letting you leave the kids to surf safely without you having to stand over them.

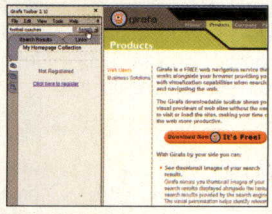
To continue using Net Nanny beyond the 15-day trial period, you can purchase a Registration Key at the special price of £29.99 – a saving of 25% on the RRP. To obtain your Registration Key please call the UK distributors Softwair Publishing Ltd on 08705 275 186. You can also order online at **www.softwair.co.uk/shop/enter.html** – please ensure you select Net Nanny V5 Special Offer to qualify for the discount.

Search software

GET WHAT YOU WANT FROM THE NET QUICKER THAN EVER WITH OUR BUMPER COMPENDIUM OF SEARCHING TOOLS

The Internet is a minefield of information, some of it good, some of it not so good, but our collection of search apps should get you through in one piece.

If you've ever sat down and tried to find some useful information on the Web, you'll probably agree that it isn't easy. It's both knowing where and how to look, while putting in enough search time. There's no denying that if you do it the right way, browsing for worthwhile research material can be extremely successful online. So if this doesn't mean landing on the first search engine you come across and typing 'stuff', then what is the solution? Luckily the CD is brimming with programs like Girafa, SurfSaver and Subject Search Spider to let you preview potential sites as thumbnails, save information easily and query multiple engines. With 15 to choose from you're spoilt for choice.



Buyers' guide

A comprehensive resource covering Internet service providers and the very best Net software and hardware. Compare them all at a glance...

Using this guide

BUYING NEW HARDWARE and software for your PC or Mac can be a tricky task. You often have to choose between products which cost the same price and seem to offer identical features. What's more, high street shops encourage you to spend a little more on buying higher spec products than you really need.

This is why *Practical Internet*'s Buyers' Guide is so useful. It's been written with everyday Net users like you in mind and only includes the products and services which we think are genuinely worth buying.

Buy with confidence

The information here is updated every month, but please note that prices and features do sometimes change before we can amend them on these pages – so it's best to check with the supplier before buying.

Look out for our cherished Star Buy logo (below) which is only awarded to the best quality products around.

Practical internet ★★ STAR BUY ★★

Which ISP?

With thousands of ISPs all offering great-looking deals, it's tough to find the right service. This guide helps decide which is best for you

BROADBAND: ADSL

ISP	URL	MONTHLY COST	SETUP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS
0800 Dial ADSL	www.0800dial.com	£28.99	£65.00	15	10	Yes
ABC Net ADSL Home 500 Self Install	www.abcnet.co.uk/	£34.99	£35.00	0	0	NK
ABC Net ADSL Home 500 Self Install 20:1	www.abcnet.co.uk/	£59.99	£35.00	0	0	NK
ABC Net ADSL Home Single User 500 USB	www.abcnet.co.uk/	£34.99	£250.00	0	0	NK
ABC Net ADSL Office 1000 Self Install	www.abcnet.co.uk/	£94.99	£35.00	0	0	NK
ABC Net ADSL Office Multi User 1000	www.abcnet.co.uk/	£99.99	£250.00	0	0	NK
ABC Net ADSL Office Multi User 500	www.abcnet.co.uk/	£69.99	£250.00	0	0	NK
Abel Always Routed1000	www.abelalways.co.uk	£109.00	£130.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
Abel Always Routed2000	www.abelalways.co.uk	£135.00	£130.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
Abel Always Routed500	www.abelalways.co.uk	£75.00	£130.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
Abel Always USB	www.abelalways.co.uk	£25.50	£210.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
ADSL NOW! 1000 (Self-Install)	www.adsl-now.co.uk	£139.77	N/A	0	0	No
ADSL NOW! 500 (Self-Install)	www.adsl-now.co.uk	£92.77	N/A	0	0	No
ADSL4Home! (Self-Install)	www.adsl-now.co.uk	£29.32	£58.69	0	0	No
Albion.net ADSL 1000 LAN	www.albion.co.uk	£109.00	N/A	Unlimited	10	Yes
Albion.net ADSL 2000 LAN	www.albion.co.uk	£139.00	N/A	Unlimited	10	Yes
Albion.net ADSL 500 LAN	www.albion.co.uk	£79.00	N/A	Unlimited	10	Yes
Albion.net ADSL 500 Single	www.albion.co.uk	£39.00	N/A	Unlimited	10	Yes
Allcomm Home 500	www.allcomm.co.uk	£25.00	£150.00	0	0	No
Allcomm S1000	www.allcomm.co.uk	£120.00	£286.00	0	0	No
Allcomm S2000	www.allcomm.co.uk	£150.00	£286.00	0	0	No
Allcomm S500	www.allcomm.co.uk	£85.00	£286.00	0	0	No
Andrews & Arnold Home 500	www.aa.nu	£58.75	£99.88	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
Andrews & Arnold Home 500 Lite (Self-Install)	www.aa.nu	£29.95	£99.88	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
Andrews & Arnold Office 500 (Self-Install)	www.aa.nu	£75.00	£99.88	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
AOL Broadband (Self Install)	www.aol.co.uk	£27.99	£85.00	7	14	Yes
applica Connect1000	www.applicabroadband.co.uk	£99.00	£25.00	50	0	NK
applica Connect500	www.applicabroadband.co.uk	£65.00	£25.00	50	0	NK
applica ConnectSolo	www.applicabroadband.co.uk	£26.99	£25.00	50	0	NK
Aviators ADSL Home 500	www.aviators.net	£29.00	£199.00	0	0	NK
BISCIT EUSB 500 (Engineer Installed)	www.biscit.com	£23.95	£210.00	0	20	NK

Quick steps to picking your ideal Internet service provider

1 What kind of broadband?

ADSL is currently the fastest-growing connection type in the UK. It relies on you shelling out for BT to 'activate' your line, then paying a monthly subscription. Expect download speeds of up to 60Kb a second with an ADSL line.

CABLE services have been around for longer, and utilise the same kind of technology that powers cable TV into many people's homes. If you live in a cable-enabled area, then you can get anything up to 120Kb a second.

SATELLITE presents the only viable broadband option for people who can't get either ADSL or cable. Costs are high, though, and setting up tends to be very complicated.

2 Can you get it?

Many people can't get ADSL or cable access because it is unavailable in their area. If this is you, take a look at our rundown of unmetered and pay-as-you-go services.

3 Getting speedy help

Worried you'll need your ISP's technical help a lot? Use our guide to find yourself an inexpensive support line.

4 Are you a Quake king?

Net gaming is coming back into the limelight with the increasing popularity of broadband. Most broadband ISPs allow you to game on their time, but check their Web site first to make sure.

5 Building a Web site?

The days when you got a free domain name with every account you set up are long gone, but you can still get your hands on masses of Web space for nothing. Check that your potential provider is generous with free Web space – although 10Mb will be more than enough for most people.

6 Check the mail

Virtually every ISP will offer you at least one POP3 email account when you sign up, but it's worth checking out the small print, especially with new 'no-frills' ADSL services which are designed to give you a basic connection and not much more.

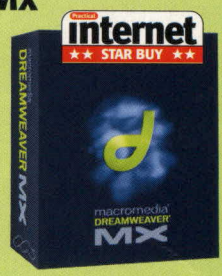
IN ASSOCIATION WITH www.net4nowt.com Net4Nowt

ISP	URL	MONTHLY COST	SETUP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS
BISCIT Home USB 500 (Self-Install)	www.biscit.com	£23.40	£15.00	0	20	NK
BISCIT OFFICE S1000 (Self-Install)	www.biscit.com	£99.95	£28.00	0	50	NK
BISCIT USB S500 (Self-Install)	www.biscit.com	£74.95	£25.00	0	50	Yes
Boltblue Broadband (Self-Install)	www.boltblue.com	£27.99	N/A	5	15	Yes
Breathepro ADSL Connect (Self Install)	www.breathe.com	£25.99	£65.00	25	25	Yes
BT Broadband	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£27.00	£30.00	0	0	No
BTopenworld Business 500 Plug & Go (Self-Install)	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£29.99	N/A	10	20	Yes
BTopenworld business1000PLUS	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£119.99	N/A	10	20	Yes
BTopenworld business500	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£29.99	£210.00	10	20	Yes
BTopenworld business500PLUS	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£79.99	N/A	10	20	Yes
BTopenworld Home Plug & Go - Line Only (Self-install)	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£29.99	N/A	10	50	Yes
BTopenworld home500	www.btopenworld.com/	£29.99	£250.00	10	50	Yes
BTopenworld Home 500 Plug & Go (Self-Install)	www.btopenworld.com/	£29.99	N/A	10	50	Yes
Business Serve 1000 Wires Only	www.businessserve.co.uk	£87.95	£60.00	0	0	No
Business Serve 2000 Wires Only	www.businessserve.co.uk	£107.95	£60.00	0	0	No
Business Serve 500 Wires Only	www.businessserve.co.uk	£67.95	£60.00	0	0	No
Business Serve SOHO Wires Only	www.businessserve.co.uk	£29.32	£60.00	0	0	No
CharityDAYS Donate ADSL Home	www.charitydays.net	£30.99	£41.13	Unlimited	250	Yes
Eclipse ADSL Connect 500lite (Self-Install)	www.eclipse.net.uk	£22.75	£25.00	Unlimited	20	Yes
edNET Multi User 500	www.ednet.co.uk	£99.95	£25.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
edNET Multi User 2000	www.ednet.co.uk	£129.95	£25.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
edNET Multi User 1000	www.ednet.co.uk	£199.95	£25.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
edNET Single User 500	www.ednet.co.uk	£29.95	£25.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
fairADSL (Self-Install)	www.fairadsl.co.uk	£18.99	£33.00	1	0	Yes
Firenet Speedwire 500	www.firenet.uk.net	£26.50	£75.00	Unlimited	10	Yes
Firstnet Single User	www.firstnet.net.uk	£75.00	£65.00	Unlimited	20	Yes
Force9 ADSL 500	www.force9.co.uk	£64.63	£305.50	Unlimited	500	Yes
Force9 ADSL Home	www.force9.co.uk	£22.99	£246.75	Unlimited	250	Yes
Force9 ADSL Home - Self Install	www.force9.co.uk	£22.99	£41.13	Unlimited	250	Yes
Force9 ADSL Netstart	www.force9.co.uk	£47.00	£176.25	Unlimited	250	Yes
Force9 ADSL Netstart - Self Install	www.force9.co.uk	£35.24	£58.75	Unlimited	250	Yes
Force9 ADSL Office 500 - Self Install	www.force9.co.uk	£64.63	£58.75	Unlimited	250	Yes
Free-Online ADSL 500	www.free-online.co.uk	£64.63	£305.50	Unlimited	500	Yes
Free-Online ADSL Netstart	www.free-online.co.uk	£47.00	£176.25	Unlimited	500	Yes
Free-Online ADSL Netstart - Self Install	www.free-online.co.uk	£35.24	£58.75	Unlimited	250	Yes
Free-Online ADSL Office 500 - Self Install	www.free-online.co.uk	£64.63	£58.75	Unlimited	250	Yes
Freedom2Surf Pure IP 1000 (Self-Install)	www.freedom2surf.net	£95.00	£29.99	20	20	Yes
Freedom2Surf Pure IP 500 (Self-Install)	www.freedom2surf.net	£60.00	£29.99	20	20	Yes
Freeserve Broadband (Self-Install)	www.freeserve.com	£27.99	£84.99	Unlimited	150	Yes
Gconnect Business 1000 (Self-Install)	www.adsl-business.co.uk	£110.00	£30.00	1	20	NK
Gconnect Business 2000 (Self-Install)	www.adsl-business.co.uk	£140.00	£30.00	1	20	NK
Gconnect Business 500 Single User (Self-Install)	www.adsl-business.co.uk	£29.99	£30	1	20	NK
Gconnect Micro Business 500 (Self-Install)	www.adsl-business.co.uk	£50.00	£30	1	20	NK
Go-Plus Fast (Self-Install)	www.go-plus.net	£25.00	£60.00	Unlimited	10	Yes
Inweb Home 500 (Self-Install)	www.inweb.net.uk	£28.99	£76.38	Unlimited	10	Yes
Jings 500U PLUS	www.jings.com	£59.99	£180.00	Unlimited	25	Yes
Jolt Home500 Lite (Self Install)	www.jolt.co.uk	£22.99	£58.75	Unlimited	Unlimited	No
Jolt Office500 (Self Install)	www.jolt.co.uk	£29.99	£58.75	Unlimited	Unlimited	No
Kingston Karoo RapidTime Pro	www.kingstonbiz.net	£38.99	£150.00	Unlimited	20	Yes
MacAce AlwaysOn@Home ADSL500 (Self-Install)	www.macace.net	£29.99	£58.75	5	0	No
Madasafish Dazzle 500U 24	www.madasafish.com	£55.95	N/A	Unlimited	25	Yes
Madasafish Dazzle 500U PLUS	www.madasafish.com	£59.99	£180.00	Unlimited	25	Yes
Mailbox Business Connect 500	www.mailbox.net.uk	£75.00	£135.00	10	25	Yes
Mailbox BusinessWire 500 (Self-Install)	www.mailbox.net.uk	£75.00	£30.00	10	25	Yes
Mailbox Standard Connect 500	www.mailbox.net.uk	£34.08	£30.00	10	25	Yes
MetroNet 500	www.metronet.co.uk	£35.99	£176.25	5	20	Yes
MetroNet S500	www.metronet.co.uk	£186.83	£305.50	50	20	Yes
MetroNet S1000	www.metronet.co.uk	£186.83	£305.50	50	20	Yes
Netscalibur SoHo 500 (Self Install)	www.netscalibur.co.uk	£34.08	£64.63	Unlimited	20	Yes
Netscalibur Business 1000 (Self-Install)	www.netscalibur.co.uk	£158.63	£323.13	Unlimited	20	Yes
Netscalibur Business 500 (Self-Install)	www.netscalibur.co.uk	£116.33	£323.13	Unlimited	20	Yes
NewNet Business 1000 (Self Install)	www.newnet.co.uk	£92.00	£25.00	Unlimited	125	Yes
NewNet Business 500 (Self Install)	www.newnet.co.uk	£61.00	£25.00	Unlimited	125	Yes
NewNet Business 500 PLUS	www.newnet.co.uk	£88.13	£305.50	Unlimited	100	Yes
NewNet Home 500 M (Self Install)	www.newnet.co.uk	£32.00	£25.00	Unlimited	25	Yes
NewNet Home 500 N (Self Install)	www.newnet.co.uk	£24.00	£25.00	5	0	Yes
NewNet Home 500 S (Self Install)	www.newnet.co.uk	£27.00	£25.00	Unlimited	25	Yes
OneTel Unplugged 500 Plug & Play (Self-Install)	www.onetel.co.uk	£27.99	£60.00	1	0	No
Onyx Business Broadband Silver (Self-Install)	www.onyx-adsl.net	£82.25	N/A	Unlimited	25	Yes
Onyx Home Office Broadband (Self-Install)	www.onyx-adsl.net	£29.99	N/A	Unlimited	0	Yes
Pipemedia USB 512K	www.adsl.uk.net	£57.58	£235.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
PIPEX Business 500	www.pipex.com	£82.19	£323.13	12	50	Yes
PIPEX Xtreme Business 500 (Self-Install)	www.pipex.com	£76.32	£70.50	12	50	Yes
PIPEX Xtreme Home Office (Self-Install)	www.pipex.com	£29.32	£70.50	12	50	Yes
PIPEX Xtreme Solo (Self-Install)	www.pipex.com	£23.44	£58.75	12	50	Yes
PlusNet ADSL 500	www.plus.net	£88.13	£152.75	Unlimited	500	Yes
PlusNet ADSL Home	www.plus.net	£22.99	£246.75	Unlimited	250	Yes
PlusNet ADSL 1000	www.plus.net	£129.25	£152.75	Unlimited	500	Yes
PlusNet ADSL Netstart	www.plus.net	£246.75	£35.24	Unlimited	250	Yes
PlusNet ADSL Home Surf - Self Install	www.plus.net	£19.99	N/A	Unlimited	25	Yes
PlusNet ADSL Netstart - Self Install	www.plus.net	£35.24	£29.38	Unlimited	250	Yes

TOP BUYS

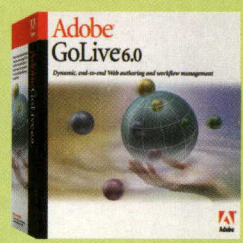
Web site builders

Dreamweaver MX



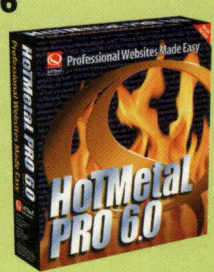
£352.31
www.macromedia.com
What's good? Reaches new levels of usability, all you need to create dynamic Web sites
What's bad? It's still very very expensive
Telephone: 0800 8358 5857
Verdict: 92%

Adobe GoLive 6



£229
www.adobe.com
What's good? Delivers superb results and allows you to create content for numerous different platforms
What's bad? It isn't cheap, some areas of the program still more baffling than Dreamweaver
Telephone: 020 8606 4001
Verdict: 82%

HoTMetaL Pro 6



£79
www.hotmetalpro.com
What's good? Inexpensive program with expensive-looking features
What's bad? The integration of HTML coding might bamboozle beginners
Telephone: 020 8387 4110
Verdict: 73%

Flash MX

£369
www.macromedia.com
What's good? The totally revamped interface is superior to its predecessors, plenty of new tools
What's bad? Still a bit expensive
Telephone: 0800 8358 5857
Verdict: 94%

Buyers' guide

Which ISP?

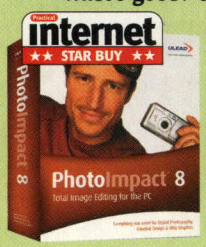
TOP BUYS

Web image editors

PhotoImpact 8

£89

www.ulead.co.uk



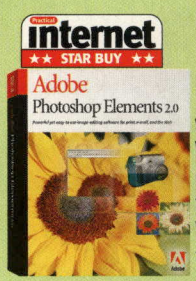
What's good? Comprehensive imaging package that takes the needs of Web users into account

What's bad? Could be considered pricey

Telephone: 01327 844755

Verdict: 91%

Adobe Photoshop Elements 2.0



£88

www.adobe.com

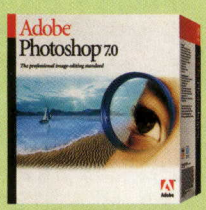
What's good? Unrivalled range of incredible features. Great value

What's bad? There aren't that many major changes since version one

Telephone: 020 8606 4000

Verdict: 92%

Adobe Photoshop 7.0



£586.33

www.adobe.com

What's good? A truly amazing set of tools for graphic professionals

What's bad? Expensive and still a little complicated in some areas

Telephone: 020 8606 4001

Verdict: 89%

JASC Paint Shop Pro 8

£99

www.digitalworkshop.co.uk

What's good? Cheap, intuitive and easy to use. A dream for those new to the world of graphics

What's bad? Doesn't offer the same depth of features as Adobe's Photoshop

Telephone: 01295 258335

Verdict: 90%

ISP	URL	MONTHLY COST	SETUP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS
PlusNet ADSL Office 500 - Self Install	www.plus.net	£64.63	£29.38	Unlimited	500	Yes
Poptel Home Office Basic 500	www.poptel.coop	£41.07	£293.69	5	10	Yes
Poptel Home User Basic 500	www.poptel.coop	£35.19	£176.19	5	10	Yes
Poptel Office Standard 500	www.poptel.coop	£92.83	£305.50	5	10	Yes
Scotland4me	www.scotland4me.net	£29.38	£70.50	Unlimited	50	No
Silvermead Broadband (Self-Install)	www.silvermead.net	£28.99	£65.00	15	10	Yes
Sniff Out DreamTime (Self-Install)	www.sniffout.net	£23.49	£58.75	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
Sonnet Internet Office 1000 Self-Install	www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£105.75	£70.50	500	250	Yes
Sonnet Internet Office 500 Self-Install	www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£76.38	£70.50	500	250	Yes
Sonnet Internet Professional 500 Self-Install	www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£29.38	£70.50	500	100	Yes
Star - Broad Star Remote	www.star.net.uk	£70.50	£293.75	0	0	No
Supanet - 0512Kbps	www.supanet.com	£29.99	£119.99	Unlimited	20	Yes
Timewarp ADSL Home User (Self-Install)	www.timewarp.co.uk	£29.99	£58.75	1	10	Yes
Timewarp ADSL Online User (Self-Install)	www.timewarp.co.uk	£28.20	£58.75	1	10	Yes
Timewarp ADSL SOHO User (Self-Install)	www.timewarp.co.uk	£40.00	£58.75	3	20	Yes
Timewarp Office 500 (Self-Install)	www.timewarp.co.uk	£94.00	£58.75	3	50	Yes
Tiscali Broadband (Self-Install)	www.tiscali.co.uk	£19.99	£50.00	6	100	Yes
Tiscali Broadband Plus (Self-Install)	www.tiscali.co.uk	£27.99	N/A	6	100	Yes
Tiscali T500	www.tiscali.co.uk	£89.29	£305.50	Unlimited	50	Yes
UTV Clicksilver Business	u.tv	£35.25	£58.75	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
UTV Clicksilver Residential	u.tv	£27.50	£49.50	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
V Two One Business 500 (Self-Install)	www.v21.co.uk	£64.63	£70.49	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
V Two One Home User (Self-Install)	www.v21.co.uk	£19.99	£70.49	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
V Two One Business 1000 (Self-Install)	www.v21.co.uk	£105.75	£70.49	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
V Two One Business 2000 (Self-Install)	www.v21.co.uk	£159.25	£70.49	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
VIA NET.WORKS United Kingdom Basic 500 (Self-Install)	www.vianetworks.co.uk	£82.25	£58.75	30	50	Yes
Virgin.net Broadband (Self-Install)	www.virgin.net	£24.99	£39.99	5	10	Yes
Vispa Home 500 (Self-Install)	www.vispa.net	£28.99	£58.75	Unlimited	15	Yes
Vulture Capital ADSL Connect (Self-Install)	www.vcisp.net	£25.99	£65.00	25	25	Yes
ZenADSL Home (Self-Install)	www.zenadsl.com	£25.52	£25.00	5	50	Yes
ZenADSL Multi-User 512Kbps	www.zenadsl.com	£76.38	£305.50	5	50	Yes
ZenADSL Single-User 512Kbps	www.zenadsl.com	£29.99	£176.25	5	50	Yes
ZeNOC GamesStream 512	www.zenoc.net	£55.00	£100.00	5	20	Yes
ZeNOC WorkStream 512	www.zenoc.net	£115.00	£300.00	5	20	Yes

BROADBAND: CABLE

ISP	URL	MONTHLY COST	SETUP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS
blueyonder broadband 1Mb	info.blueyonder.co.uk/	£39.99	£50.00	15	30	Yes
Blueyonder broadband 500	info.blueyonder.co.uk/	£29.99	£50.00	15	30	Yes
NTL 128K	www.ntl.co.uk	£14.99	£25.00	15	55	Yes
NTL 1Mb	www.ntl.co.uk	£49.99	N/A	15	55	Yes
NTL 600K	www.ntl.co.uk	£24.99	N/A	15	55	Yes

BROADBAND: SATELLITE

ISP	URL	MONTHLY COST	SETUP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS
Bentley Walker Bronze Surfer	www.bentleywalker.com	£75.00	£100.00	0	0	No
BTopenworld Business Satellite 500/1	www.btopenworld.com/	£70.49	£1,056.33	20	20	Yes
BTopenworld Business Satellite 500/4	www.btopenworld.com/	£129.24	£1,526.33	100	20	Yes
Europe Online	www.europeonline.com	£6.36	N/A	5	0	Yes
HSIViaSat Home Edition	www.hsiviasat.com	£29.07	N/A	0	0	No
Mac-1 Internet USB Bronze	www.mac-1.com	£182.13	N/A	0	0	No
SatDrive	www.satdrive.com	£14.99	£399.00	0	0	No
Silvermead Satellite Broadband	www.silvermead.net	£34.99	£49.99	15	10	Yes
Skystorm	www.skystorm.net	£17.63	N/A	0	0	No
Starspeeder	www.starspeeder.co.uk	£17.63	N/A	0	0	No
Xantic	www.xanticbroadband.com	£29.38	£180.95	0	0	No

BROADBAND: WIRELESS

ISP	URL	MONTHLY COST	SETUP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS
IAP Broadband	www.iap.uk.net	£29.99	£150.00	10	10	Yes
IAP Broadband X2	www.iap.uk.net	£39.99	£150.00	10	10	Yes
IAP Unmetered	www.iap.uk.net	£11.99	£150.00	5	5	Yes
IAP Unmetered X2	www.iap.uk.net	£19.99	£150.00	5	5	Yes
Liberty Broadband (business)	www.libertybroadband.co.uk	£111.61	£175.08	Unlimited	20	Yes
Liberty Broadband (consumer)	www.libertybroadband.co.uk	£46.99	£175.08	10	20	Yes

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
www.net4nowt.com
Net 4 Nowt

0845 INTERNET PROVIDERS

NAME	URL	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS	V90	K64	K128
Abel GRATIS Plus	www.abelgratis.co.uk	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
BlueCarrots Anywhere	www.bluecarrots.com	15	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
blueyonder	www.blueyonder.co.uk	15	30	Yes	Free	Yes	Yes	Yes
Breathepro Easyconnect	www.breathe.com	25	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	No
British Library Net	www.britishlibrary.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
BT Access	www.btclickforbusiness.com	10	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
CharityDAYS Donate At Home Free	www.charitydays.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	No
CharityDAYS Donate At Work Free	www.charitydays.net	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chilly Hippo	www.chilly-hippo.co.uk	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
ClaraNET	www.clara.net	Unlimited	10	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clearsignals	www.clearsignals.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Club 24 Internet	www.club24.co.uk	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dabs netdial	www.dabs.net	25	25	No	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Dabsol	www.dabs.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
Demon Express Total (Self-Install)	www.demon.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	Local Rate	NK	Yes	Yes
Devilnet United Kingdom	www.devilnet.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
EidosNet	www.eidosnet.co.uk	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
E-Plus	www.e-plus.co.uk	Unlimited	15	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Euphony.net	www.euphony.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Everywhere Broadband	www.everywherebroadband.com	10	20	Yes	NK	NK	Yes	Yes
Fasthosts LoCall	dial.fasthosts.co.uk	Unlimited	200	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes	No
Firenet	www.firenet.uk.net	15	10	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Flyer Internet	internet.flyer.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Force9 Business Free	www.force9.co.uk	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Force9 Free	www.force9.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Free United Kingdom	www.freeuk.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Freebeeb	www.beeb.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 60p	Yes	Yes	No
Freedom 2 Surf	www.freedom2surf.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes	Yes
FreeNEasy	www.freeneasy.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes	Yes
FreeNet	www.freenet.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Freenetname	www.freenetname.co.uk	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No	No
Freeola.net	www.freeola.com	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Free-Online Business Free	www.free-online.co.uk	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Free-Online Free	www.free-online.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Freeserve NoTies	www.freeserve.com	Unlimited	150	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
FreeUnited Kingdom	www.freeuk.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Freewire	www.freewire.net	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
FreeZone	www.freezone.co.uk	Unlimited	20	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Games Terminal	www.gterminal.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	National Rate	Yes	No	No
Go There Internet	www.gothere.uk.com	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
GoFree	www.gofree.co.uk	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Go-Legend	www.go-legend.net	Unlimited	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
GPAnet	www.gpanet.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hot-Toast	www.hot-toast.com	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
i12	www.i12.com	Unlimited	500	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
IofM.net	www.iofm.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
IXUnited Kingdom	www.ixuk.com	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
JellyPeople.com	www.jellypeople.com	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Loyal Mail	www.loyalmail.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Free	Yes	Yes	No
MacUnlimited	www.macunlimited.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mersinet	www.mersinet.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Messages	www.messages.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Ministry of Sound	www.ministryofsound.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
MWfree.net	www.mwfree.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No	No
MyETI	www.eti.uk.com	Unlimited	15	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
NASCR	www.nascr.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
NetDirect Online	www.instant.ndo.com	Unlimited	20	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
One Way Internet - PAYG	www.onewayinternet.co.uk	Unlimited	100	No	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Onet	www.onet.co.uk	Unlimited	30	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
OnlineServe Dial Lite	www.onlineserve.co.uk	Unlimited	10	Yes	Free	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oxfree	www.oxfree.com	Unlimited	20	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes	Yes
PlusNet Business Free	www.plus.net	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
PlusNet Free	www.plus.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prontoserve	www.Prontoserve.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	No	Yes	Yes
Qadisho	www.qadisho.com	15	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
Rapidial	www.Rapidial.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
RugbyWeb	www.rugbyweb.co.uk	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No	No
Sniff Out Classic	www.sniffout.net	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sonnet Internet Just Dial	www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes*	Yes
South West Net	www.swest.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Sparticus.net	www.sparticus.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 60p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Supanet Classic	www.supanet.com	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
SurfAnytime	www.surfanytime.co.uk	15	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
Tellnet	www.tellnet.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tiscali Pay As You Go	www.tiscali.co.uk	Unlimited	100	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
Vispa Connect Valuetime	www.vispa.net	Unlimited	15	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vulture Capital Easy Connect	www.vcisp.net	25	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Waitrose.com	www.waitrose.com	Unlimited	20	Yes	Free	Yes	Yes	No

TOP BUYS

Digital cameras

Nikon CoolPix 4500

£599
www.nikon.co.uk
What's good? Quality snapper that yields great results with very little effort
What's bad? Looks really weird
Telephone: 020 8481 6875
Verdict: 90%

Kodak CX4230

£199.99
www.kodak.co.uk
What's good? Nice range of easy-to-use features
What's bad? Needs newer hardware to run at full pelt
Telephone: 0870 243 0270
Verdict: 84%

Rioch Caplio RR1

£749.99
www.rioch.co.uk
What's good? A sleek slimline camera with oodles of quality to boot
What's bad? Looks a bit cheap and the zoom is a little bit dodgy
Telephone: 01782 753300
Verdict: 90%

Pentax Optio 330

£499
www.pentax.co.uk
What's good? Excellent features and options. Compact and cheap at the price
What's bad? Its bulk can be bothersome
Telephone: 01753 792792
Verdict: 91%

Buyers' guide

Which ISP?

TOP BUYS

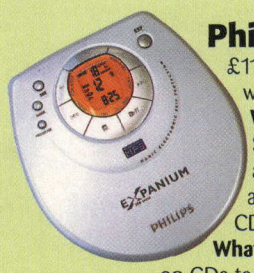
MP3 Players

Apple iPod

£299.99
www.apple.com/uk
What's good? Brilliant sound quality and the best designed player on the market
What's bad? It's not that cheap compared to its rivals
Telephone: 0800 039 1010
Verdict: 82%

Iomega HipZip

£290
www.iomega-europe.com
What's good? Uses removable media instead of flash memory, which is cheaper
What's bad? Bulkier and heavier than the Rio, also expensive
Telephone: 020 7365 9527
Verdict: 78%

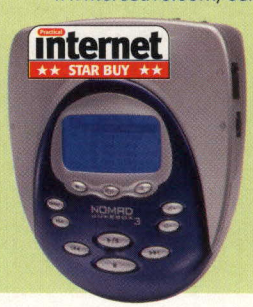


Philips EXP303

£119.99
www.philips.com
What's good? Stylish, inexpensive and easy to use. It actually plays MP3 CDs!
What's bad? Still relies on CDs to play music
Telephone: 020 8665 6350
Verdict: 79%

Nomad Jukebox 3

£349.99
www.creative.com/europe



What's good? Huge storage capacity and stunning sound quality
What's bad? Odd navigation system and PC interface
Telephone: N/A
Verdict: 92%

UNMETERED INTERNET PROVIDERS

ISP	URL	COST	FRIACO	BT LINE REQ	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS
0800Dial Home User	www.0800dial.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
0800onlineserve	www.0800.onlineserve.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	10	Yes	Free
1066ad.com Maxi Surf	www.1066ad.com	£14.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
1066ad.com Mini Surf	www.1066ad.com	£10.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
123ISP Standard	www.123isp.co.uk	£13.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
123ISP Twilight	www.123isp.co.uk	£4.95	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
123ISP Twin Lite	www.123isp.co.uk	£18.95	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
24-7Freecall	www.24-7freecall.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
4theNET Business Anytime	www.4thenet.co.uk	£23.49	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
4theNet Unlimited 24/7	www.4thenet.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
4theNET Unlimited Daytime	www.4thenet.co.uk	£4.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
4theNET Unlimited Off-peak	www.4thenet.co.uk	£9.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Abel DIAL Anytime	www.abelalways.co.uk	£27.99	No	No	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium – 25p
Abel DIAL Leisuretime	www.abelalways.co.uk	£11.99	No	No	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium – 25p
AOL	www.aol.co.uk	£15.99	No	No	7	14	Yes	Free
Arsenal AnyTime	www.arsenal.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Arsenal Hometime	www.arsenal.com	£9.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Asian Biz BusinessTime	www.asian-biz.net	£11.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Asian Biz HomeTime	www.asian-biz.net	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Asian Biz SurfTime Evenings & Weekends	www.asian-biz.net	£13.00	No	Yes	15	10	Yes	National Rate
Barclaycard.net	www.barclaycard.net	£12.95	Yes	Yes	5	20	Yes	Premium – 50p
BlueCarrots At Home	www.bluecarrots.com	£8.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
BlueCarrots Unlimited	www.bluecarrots.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Blueyonder SurfUnlimited	www.blueyonder.co.uk	£12.00	No	No	15	30	Yes	Premium – 50p
Boltblue Anytime	www.boltblue.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	5	15	Yes	National Rate
Breathe At Home	www.breathe.com	£9.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Breathe Plus	www.breathe.com	£19.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Breathe Unlimited	www.breathe.com	£13.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Breathepro Connect	www.breathe.com	£15.99	Yes	Yes	25	25	Yes	Local Rate
BT Connect Lite Anytime	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£17.63	Yes	Yes	20	20	Yes	Premium – 50p
BTopenworld Anytime	www.btopenworld.com	£15.99	Yes	Yes	10	50	Yes	Free
BTopenworld for BT Surf	www.btopenworld.com	£12.99	No	Yes	5	10	Yes	Free
Business Unmetered Business User	www.business-unmetered.com	£15.26	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Business Unmetered Business User 24	www.business-unmetered.com	£21.14	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Chalkface Anytime	www.chalkface.net	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
CharityDAYS Donate At Work Lite	www.charitydays.net	£29.36	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	500	Yes	Local Rate
CharityDAYS Donate Surf Lite	www.charitydays.net	£8.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
CharityDAYS Donate Surf Standard	www.charitydays.net	£16.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime 12	www.clara.net	£4.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime 35	www.clara.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime 80	www.clara.net	£29.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime AnyTime	www.clara.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET Freetime Anytime Business	www.clara.net	£24.99	No	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime Unlimited	www.clara.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
Dabs netinfinity	www.dabs.net	£15.99	Yes	Yes	25	25	No	Local Rate
Datanet SurfTime Off-Peak	www.datadsl.co.uk	£16.99	No	Yes	Unlimited	0	Yes	Premium – £1.00
Demon Premier Connect	www.demon.net	£18.75	No	Yes	Unlimited	20	Yes	Local Rate
dmc:dial surf:access	www.dmcdial.com	£13.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
dmc:dial surf:biz	www.dmcdial.com	£23.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
dmc:dial surf:lite	www.dmcdial.com	£7.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
Fast24 Alltime	www.fast24.co.uk	£15.00	Yes	Yes	20	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Fast24 Anytime	www.fast24.co.uk	£10.00	Yes	Yes	20	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Fast24 Daytime	www.fast24.co.uk	£11.00	Yes	Yes	20	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Fast24 Off Peak	www.fast24.co.uk	£7.00	Yes	Yes	20	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Fast4 Unlimited	www.fast4.net	£6.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	0	Yes	National Rate
Fasthosts FreeCall Home	dial.fasthosts.co.uk	£17.61	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	200	Yes	Standard BT
Firenet Anytime	www.firenet.uk.net	£11.49	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	National Rate
Force9 Connect Biz	www.force9.co.uk	£39.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	500	Yes	Local Rate
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Force9 Connect Standard	www.force9.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
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Free-Online Connect Lite	www.free-online.co.uk	£8.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect Standard	www.free-online.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
Free24-7	www.free24-7.net	£7.99	Yes	Yes	0	0	Yes	National Rate
Freechariot FC Business Unlimited	www.freechariot.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Freechariot FC Home Lite	www.freechariot.co.uk	£5.75	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
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Freechariot FC Unlimited	www.freechariot.co.uk	£13.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Freedom2Surf Anytime	www.freedom2surf.net	£11.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	20	Yes	Standard BT
Freeserve Anytime	www.freeserve.com	£13.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	150	Yes	Premium – 50p
Freeserve HomeTime	www.freeserve.com	£12.99	No	Yes	Unlimited	150	Yes	Premium – 50p
Games-World	www.games-world.net	£19.99	No	Yes	Unlimited	20	Yes	National Rate
Gconnect Anytime 64K	www.adsl-business.co.uk	£19.98	NK	No	1	20	NK	National Rate

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ic24 Office Hours	www.ic24.net	£8.99	Yes	Yes	1	0	No	Premium – 50p
Jings	www.jings.com	£14.99	Yes	Yes	1	10	No	Premium – 50p
Jolt Anytime	www.jolt.co.uk	£24.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	No	N/A
MacAce BusinessDaytime	www.macace.net	£29.38	Yes	Yes	5	0	No	National Rate
MacAce Homefree	www.macace.net	£12.00	Yes	Yes	5	0	No	National Rate
MacAce Homefree24	www.macace.net	£16.00	Yes	Yes	5	0	No	National Rate
Madasafish	www.madasafish.com	£14.99	Yes	Yes	1	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
nStream	www.nstream.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	5	25	No	Standard BT
NTL world	www.ntl.co.uk	£10.00	No	No	15	55	Yes	Free
One Way Internet	www.onewayinternet.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	100	Yes	Premium – 25p
OneTel	www.onetel.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	3	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Pipex DialTime Dedicated 1 Weekdays	www.pipex.com/	£70.21	Yes	Yes	12	50	Yes	National Rate
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Pipex DialTime Shared 5	www.pipex.com/	£34.96	Yes	Yes	12	50	Yes	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Shared Evening & w/e	www.pipex.com/	£23.21	Yes	Yes	12	50	Yes	National Rate
PlusNet Connect Biz	www.plus.net	£39.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	500	Yes	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Biz Lite	www.plus.net	£19.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	500	Yes	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Heavy User	www.plus.net	£29.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Lite User	www.plus.net	£8.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Standard	www.plus.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
Powergen Anytime	www.pgen.net	£13.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	National Rate
Powergen Daytime	www.pgen.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	National Rate
Powergen Evenings & Weekends	www.pgen.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	National Rate
Qadisho Business Unlimited	www.qadisho.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
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Quicksurfer Evenings & Weekends	www.quicksurfer.co.uk	£7.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
Quicksurfer Evenings & Weekends	www.quicksurfer.co.uk	£7.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
SafariConnect Anytime	www.safariconnect.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	5	15	Yes	Premium – 50p
SafariConnect Home&Away	www.safariconnect.com	£19.99	Yes	Yes	5	15	Yes	Premium – 50p
Silvermead Business Unlimited	www.silvermead.net	£12.91	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	National Rate
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Silvermead Unlimited @ Home	www.silvermead.net	£13.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	National Rate
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Southgrove Business Daytime	www.southgrove.com	£16.50	Yes	Yes	7	0	Yes	National Rate
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Southgrove Surfer+ 24/7	www.southgrove.com	£14.99	Yes	Yes	7	0	Yes	National Rate
Southgrove Twilight Surfer	www.southgrove.com	£5.95	Yes	Yes	7	0	Yes	National Rate
SupaNet Supahighway	www.supanet.com	£14.99	No	Yes	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium – 50p
SurfAnytime Business Unlimited	www.surfanytime.co.uk	£14.08	Yes	Yes	100	100	Yes	Premium – 50p
SurfAnytime Diamond	www.surfanytime.co.uk	£29.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium – 50p
SurfAnytime Diamond Plus	www.surfanytime.co.uk	£34.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	75	Yes	Premium – 50p
SurfAnytime Gold	www.surfanytime.co.uk	£15.49	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
SurfAnytime HomeTime	www.surfanytime.co.uk	£4.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
SurfAnytime OffPeak	www.surfanytime.co.uk	£9.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
SurfAnytime Silver	www.surfanytime.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Surfmore	www.surfmore.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	3	0	No	N/A
Tesco.net Anytime	www.tesco.net	£12.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Tesco.net Daytime	www.tesco.net	£5.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
The Posh ISP	www.theposh.com	£14.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
Timewarp 100 Evenings & Weekends	www.timewarp.co.uk	£12.64	No	Yes	6	20	Yes	National Rate
Tiny T:Surf Value	www.tinyonline.net	£8.99	Yes	Yes	5	15	Yes	Premium – 50p
TinyT:SurfPlus	www.tinyonline.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	5	15	Yes	Premium – 50p
Tiscali Anytime	www.tiscali.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	100	Yes	Premium – 50p
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Virgin.net 24seven	www.virgin.net	£13.49	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	Premium – £1.00
Vispa Connect Anytime	www.vispa.net	£14.95	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	15	Yes	National Rate
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www.creative.com

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What's bad? The image resolution could be better, sometimes comes loose

Telephone: 00 353 1 4333200

Verdict: 79%

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£129

www.europe.creative.com

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What's bad? Expensive. The digital camera aspect of the Go Plus is a tad gimmicky

Telephone: 01245 265265

Verdict: 82%

Sony CMR-PC2

£89.99

www.sonyisstorage.com

What's good? It's tiny, yet somehow manages to squeeze in the best picture quality we've seen yet

What's bad? It's a little bit fiddly to operate

Telephone: 00800 2623 7669

Verdict: 84%

Logitech ClickSmart 310

£69.99

www.logitech.com

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What's bad? Picture quality is far from stunning

Telephone: 01753 870900

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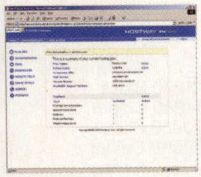

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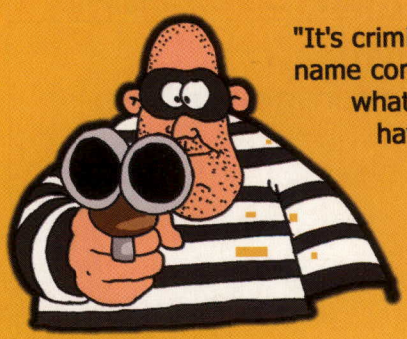

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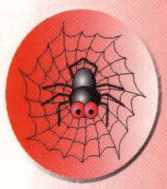

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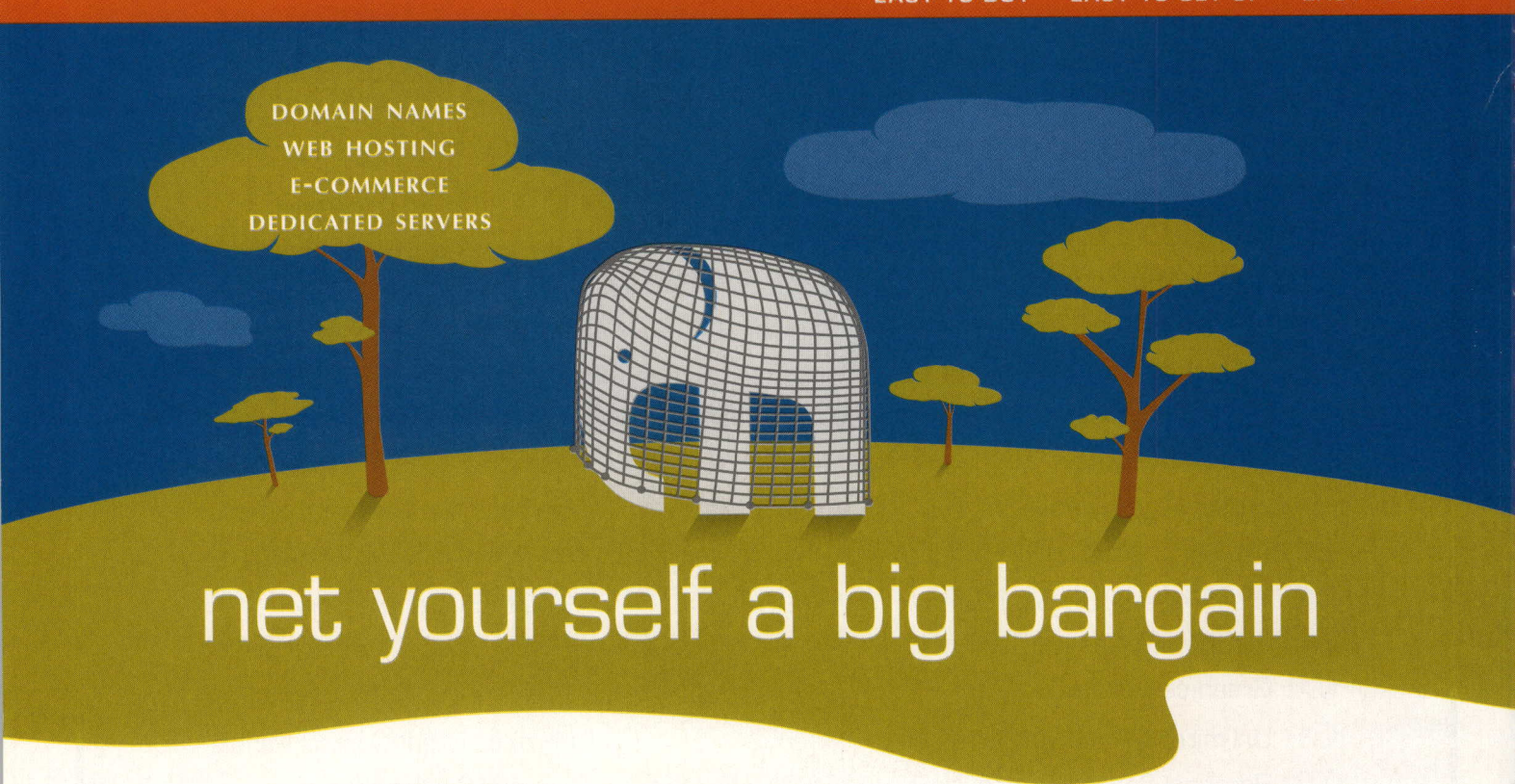

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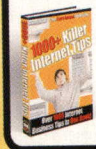

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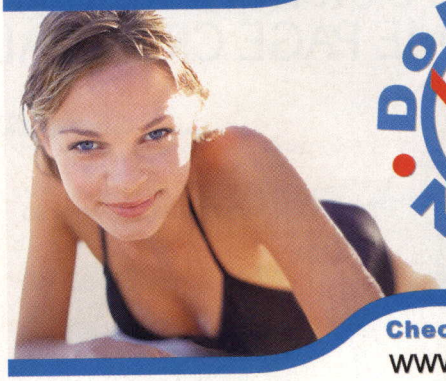

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WEB'S MOST WANTED

WE NEED YOUR HELP IN TRACKING DOWN THESE HOME PAGE CRIMINALS

Name:
MOHAMMED SAEED AL-SAHAF, OR 'MO'

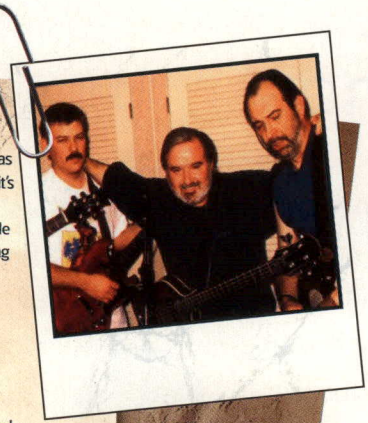
Last seen at:
64.39.15.171/

Wanted for:
This man takes lying through his teeth to the next level. Anyone who followed the Iraqi conflict on TV will be all too aware of Saddam's incredibly optimistic Information Minister. He may have gone into hiding, no-one knows, but his trademark speeches of hilarious delusion have sparked an ironic fan base worldwide. However, if this accidental comic genius was still at large he'd probably be wandering the streets of Baghdad, hunting down 'infidels' to beat rigorously with his own shoes. As the allied forces stood on the brink of victory, our man put on his bravest face: "Be assured. Baghdad is safe, protected." He promptly took the next day off work – coincidence?

Characteristics:
Apart from his leathery barefaced cheeks, 'Mo' often delivers his words of wit with something of a sarcastic grin. You can visibly see the guy struggling to maintain a straight face as he delivers such nuggets as "Britain is not worth an old shoe," or "We will kill them all... most of them." Unfortunately he does choose to deliver these rousing sound bites against a backdrop of ruined buildings and bomb rubble. But he'd probably just claim it was Saddam's latest development site for a chocolate orphanage, as star-spangled scuds whistle past his natty beret.

Significant others:
Difficult to say, this one. Reports can't confirm if he's married, but let's face it, if his missus had left him he'd be in serious denial. He does talk a lot about Allah though, and he's bound to be a favoured guest at the Husseins. In fact, unfounded rumours are that his popularity has a certain Mr Bin Laden considering Howard Stern as his new PA. Who knows? It could even spawn the love and adoration of a home page like this one. Mo has found a new lease of life in the gallery of crazy images that his deadpan face has been grafted onto. So it seems only right that we let our friend have the last word: "There are no American infidels in Baghdad. Never!"

Quote:
(On allied forces capturing the airport) "They are nowhere near the airport... they are lost in the desert... they cannot read a compass... they are retarded."



Name:
THE BEERCATS

Last seen at:
www.beercats.com

Wanted for:
Just about every crime against music you could possibly imagine, one suspects. These rock 'n roll dinosaurs claim to be a debauched tour de force, loving nothing more than a drunken strum (ahem). You might wonder how a supposedly legendary combo has found the time to build such an 'interesting' site. Well frankly, they haven't. It's either had the Stevie Wonder design treatment, or the group were too wasted after a gig to bother. Pay particular attention to the innovative use of animated beer bottles that cascade down the page. Then wonder why Dreamweaver doesn't contain these 'features' as you shake your head in disbelief.

Characteristics:
Often the heady world of rock spews up some iconic figures with really cool names. There's obviously 'Slash' and loosely, U2's 'The Edge', but can you honestly conjure the same mystique with aliases such as 'The Ranger', 'The Penguin' and 'The Karate Dude'? There's just no threat there, no danger, and when you look like someone's cuddly dad, sinister pseudonyms won't wash. But give the Beercats their due; it seems the whole band persona has evolved with tongues firmly in cheeks. If it's not mock press conferences filled with spurious comparisons that actually humble The Beatles, there's always helpful drinking advice. Never ever visit this site sober.

Significant others:
Apart from legions of adoring fans, the Beercats are a band boasting numerous co-collaborators. These 'honorary beercateers' are apparently of such musical calibre that occasionally they are invited to lend a hand. It's hard to establish if being tone-deaf and cack-handed qualifies here, because the online gig recordings are suspiciously missing, but Jack 'Harpo' Dudley or original drummer Cleotis T. don't strike you as virtuosos. There is however, an extensive collection of 'on the road' snaps, proving that one of the guys knows how to doctor images... badly. The prospect of George Harrison's Indian hiatus leading him to the Beercats, or the Stones enlisting 'The Ranger' over Ronnie Wood, is almost too much to bear.

Quote:
"The better you get, the drunker we sound!"

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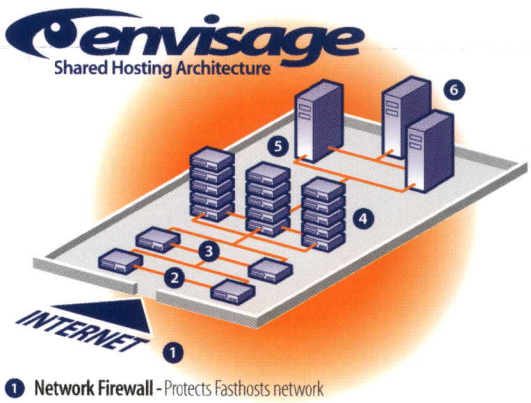

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